

ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE PROGRAMME



CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

2005-2006

DESIGN REPORT

SYNTHETIC LANDSCAPE: RENOVATION OF KOWLOON PARK

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May 2006



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Research Work - City :: Landscape :: Urbanism

1.0 Introduction

- City Making and the making of Park

Historically, park design had been regarded as the making of community places in which nature both connected to a recreational destination and with social activities. Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of the Central Park, spent his whole life exploring the art of landscape. He studied a lot on the relation of sight to the well-being of the whole person. In one of his most concise statements he asserted that "A man's eyes cannot be as much as occupied as they are in large cities by artificial things...without a harmful effect, first on his mental and nervous system and ultimately on his entire constitutional organization." Landscape provided a relief from the "rigidity and confinement and protrusion of art of the ordinary conditions of the city. It was able to refresh and delight the eye and through the eye, the mind and the spirit."

Urban life and the pressure of business required great and tiring concentration. In Frederick Law Olmsted's view, well designed natural scenery could actually soothe and heal such kind of urban disease. After their tiring day, or on their day off, people can leave their noisy, dirty day-to-day world to search for nature and experience comfort.

Today, as the city become denser and denser, and the urban life become even more complex, the design of urban park is not just about curing urban diseases resulting from pressure of urban life. The design of urban park should promote ways to cope with, and indulge in, the complex requirement of an evolving natural system, its cohabiting complex urban system, and the mutually emergent result. It is not just simply about making of parks but the making of the city. An urban park should be considered as an integral part of the city which supports and intensifies urban life of the city by creating dynamic relationships, behaviour and self-organization with various city sectors.

2.0 Abstract

- Urban Parks in Hong Kong

Seven millions of people living in a small city like Hong Kong is totally incredible in comparison to lots of other 'modernized cities' in Europe. The density of population results in a situation that the city is so closely packed with hyper-density cores. There are almost no breathing areas and the lack of habitable open area would probably become a major urban problem in Hong Kong. One easy solution to that would certainly be changing the OZP to obtain more open space. However, sometimes it is more a question of the quality of these spaces rather than the quantity of these spaces, especially in a dense city like Hong Kong.

Take the Kowloon Wall City Park as an example. It is built after the Old Kowloon Wall City had been demolished. Some ruins of the Kowloon Wall City had been kept in the Park and a lot of money had also been spent to imitate the traditional Chinese Garden. Years after it had been built, still the usage of the Park is relatively low. Some people might not even have visited this Park. Location might be one reason why people are not using this Park, but one major problem is that there is almost no relationship of the Park to the city. There are no designs of access and no activities designated for the place. It is just a piece of green placed on dense urban fabrics.

The Central Park in New York might serve as a counter example. The Central Park might be the only major green area in the city but it serves a lot more than other parks in Hong Kong. There are enormous amount of crossings everyday and the Park also accommodates lots of other activities. This reveals to us that a Park could perform not only as a system of artificial nature, but also a sociable place where the public can enjoy their life. The main concern is we have to put careful considerations in

the design of an 'urban park'.

May be using the reclaimed land along the harbour front to build a forest in the city as Christine Luk suggested in the lecture is a good idea, but how does that function? May be turning the West Kowloon into another Victoria Park is also a great idea, but again how does that function?

Are we great creating parks that people are enthusiastic about using? Or are we settling for mediocre parks that just minimally meet people's needs? ²

This paper would use Kowloon Park as an example to discuss about the idea of urban park as an emergence of notion of nature, landscape, city and urbanism.

3.0 Context of Kowloon Park

- Historical and contextual background

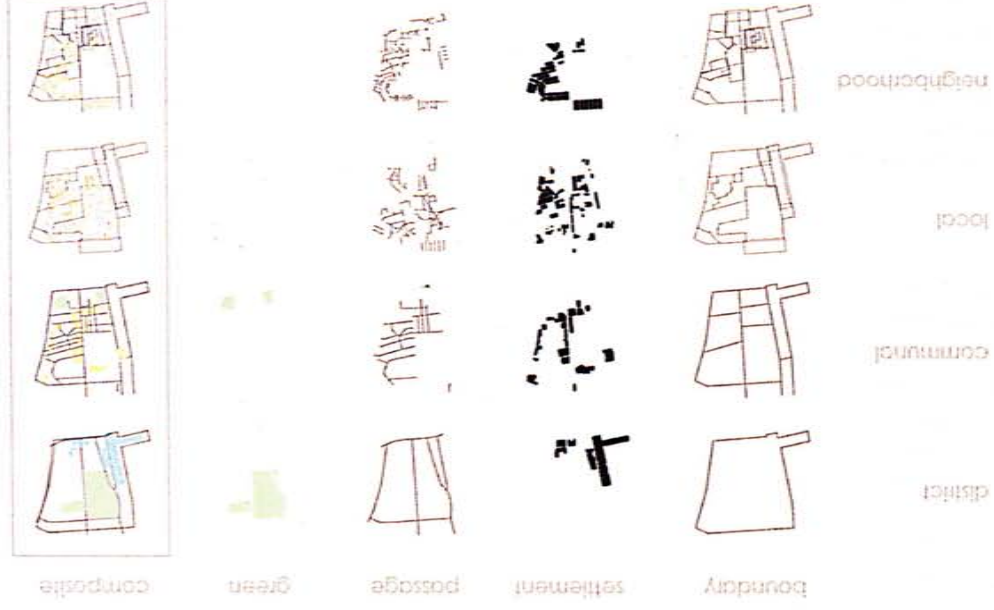
Kowloon Park is a former site of a military barracks standing on a small hill in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui. It was open to public after an extensive renovation in 1989.

The park has a total area of 13.47 hectares, offering different kinds of active and passive recreational facilities to the public ranging from sports centre to aviary. Based on the observation of the site organization, the northern part of Kowloon Park is selected for active recreational area whereas the passive amenities area is mainly in the south.

The park is bounded by four major streets of the district. On the east is Nathan Road, which is probably the longest activity street in the Kowloon Peninsula. On the west is Canton Road with a branch road (Kowloon Park Drive) cutting through the Park. On the north is Austin Road which divides Tsim Sha Tsui and Jordan while on the south is a very vibrant street - Hai Phong Road.

Historically, the park is so important because of its topographical location which allowed easy military control. However, the park has already lost its military significance today and it is now just a piece of elevated green resisting the crazy urban development happening around. For instance, the northern part of the park has already been turned into building area. High-rise residential building, hotel and police station had erected throughout the years. The south western corner had also been cut out by the highway - Kowloon Park Drive which resulted in a leftover triangular piece of un-used land in the city.

Sitting in the centre of Tsim Sha Tsui where land is always precious for development, Kowloon Park is like a piece of valuable cake being engulfed by its various neighborhoods. It is so beautiful to have a big piece of green located right in the city centre and this park should always be dedicated to the public. Therefore, it is really necessary to re-consider how this piece of green should perform and how an urban park should function.



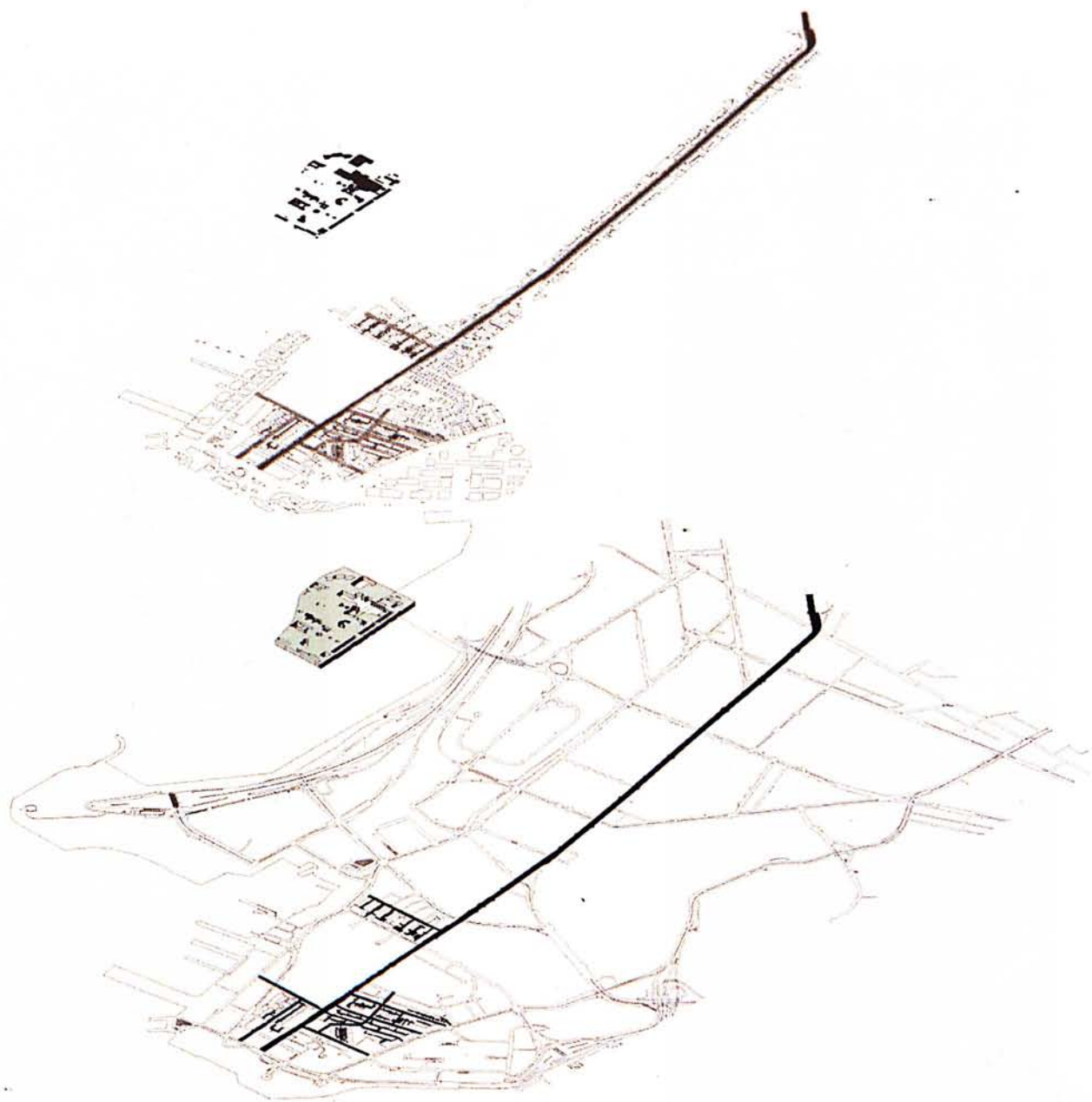
3.0 Context of Kowloon Park

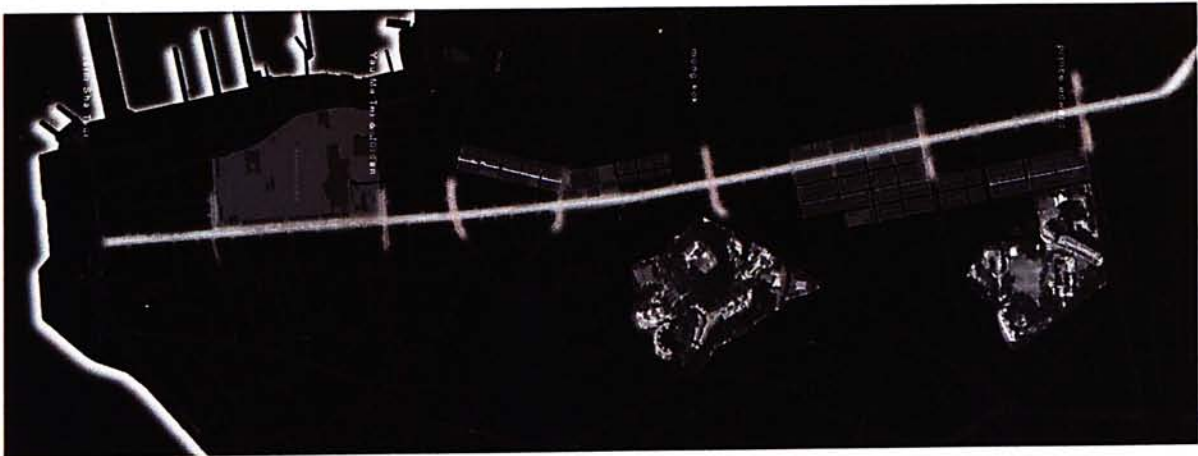
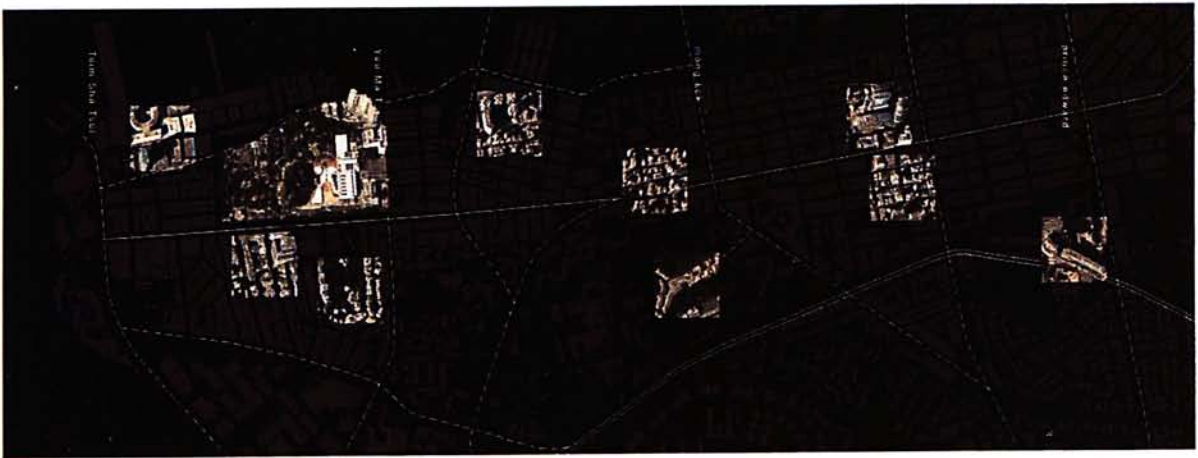
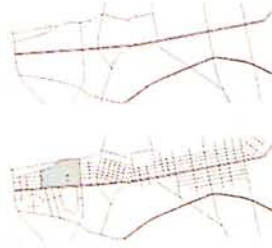
- Nathan Road as spine of city

The eastern edge of Kowloon Park is tied to Nathan Road, probably the longest activity street in Kowloon. It is both interesting and necessary to explore what is the significance of a long line attached to this big patch and how this long line function.

Nathan Road runs from Prince Edward to Tsim Sha Tsui through Mong Kok, Yau Ma Tei and Jordan. Urbanistically, this line penetrates through various kinds of urban fabrics and thus tying up different kinds of activities. It is like the main artery of the city carrying energy from other part of the city to major vessels, to smaller tissues and finally to all kinds of cell in the city. The activities along the spine might function quite individually or actually relate to something else rather than Nathan Road, but they are still tied up by this long long line. It is interesting to see that the city works as a whole because of a line.

Meanwhile, the edge of the Park that touches Nathan Road is a shopping street named Park Lane. It consists of some of the classiest boutiques in Hong Kong. Besides a shopping street, this part of Nathan Road also serves as major entrance of Kowloon Park. Grand stairs are found occasionally on the Road leading up to the Park. It seems that apart from these stairs, the Park is almost cut off from the pedestrian route and the city. Although the insertion of shopping elements to the Park might be a good idea to vitalize the Park, it is really necessary to redefine the present edge condition and the role of Nathan Road to the Park.





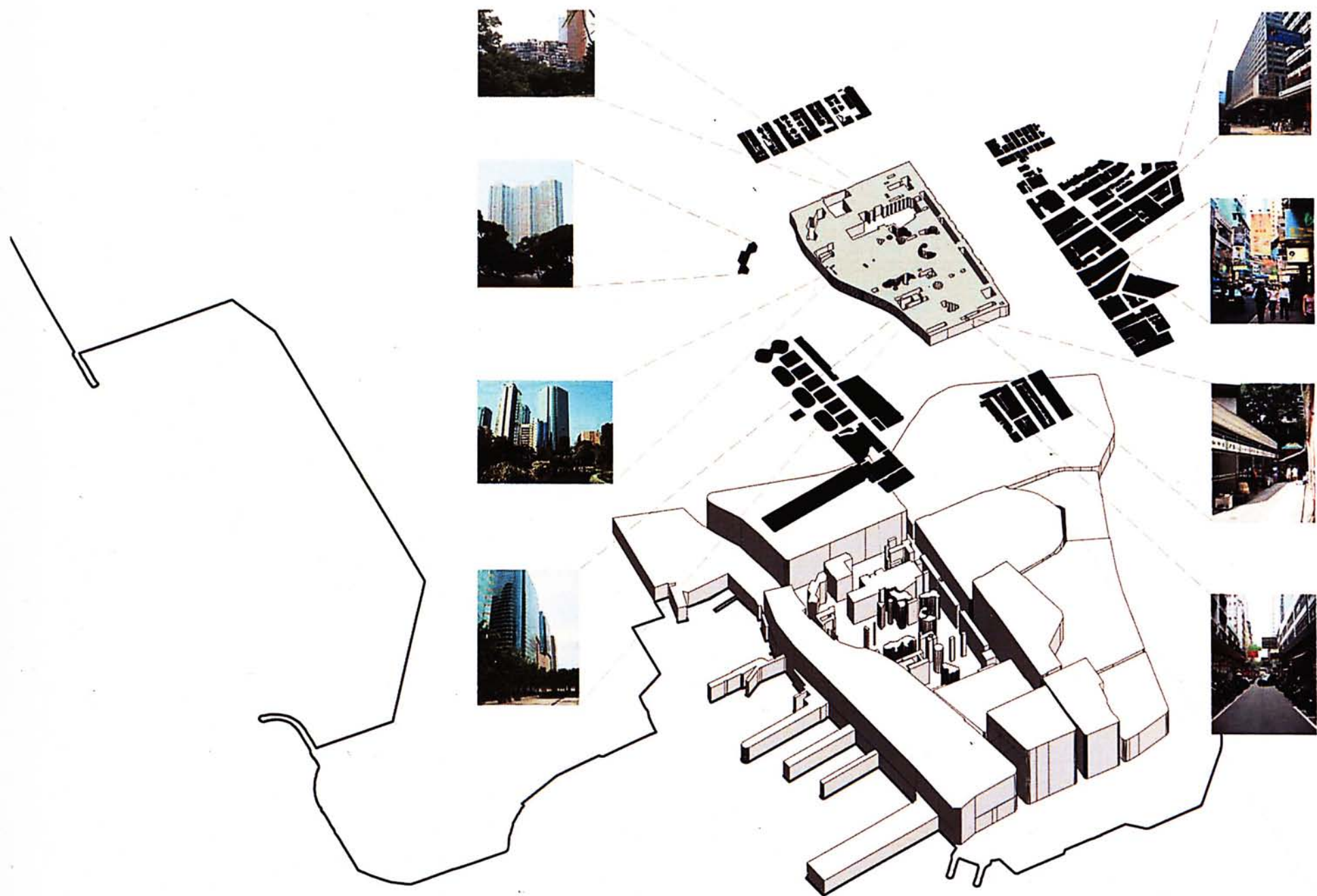
3.0 Context of Kowloon Park - Kowloon Park as microcosm

Kowloon Park is a piece of precious land because of its size and location in the city. Situated right in the centre of activities, Kowloon Parks ties to various scales of urban fabrics. On the contrary, the Park itself could actually be considered as a piece of scaleless land without fabrics. This produces an interesting dynamic between city and nature, landscape and fabrics. How would this kind of contradiction help in shaping the city?

Seen at metropolitan scale, Kowloon Park is itself a patch in relationship to other aggregates or city sectors. At a more local scale, the perimeter of the Park had set up a finer gradation of patchwork chain with the adjacencies. For example, the mosque and the Chong Ching Mansion had already set up some kind of resonance; the Park Lane is also a correspondence to the opposite shopping streets. These kind of resonance reveal to us that the careful selection of patch sizes, their distribution and adjacencies could actually creates a framework for dynamic relationships, behaviour and self organization.

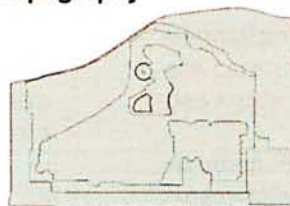
Apart from the periphery situation, attention should be paid to the internal organization of the Park. Because of its geographical location, Kowloon Park is considered to be a void in the city occupied by floating objects. It both ties up various scales of fabric around and serves as a microcosm housing lots of internal activities. We can imagine there are old people playing chess right next to a group of people practicing Tai Chi while a crowd passing through after their shopping. So, there exists that kind of dynamic between micro and macro strategies of the Park.

Due to its size and its uniqueness of being public entity, the design of Kowloon Park actually has the opportunity of retrieve its own identity from organizing the neighborhood around. Also because of its size and location, the Park has the opportunity to facilitate collision of various scales of activities internally. How should such kind of characteristic be expressed and addressed in order to set up a finer relationship between city and nature, fabrics and landscape?

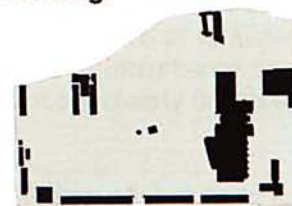




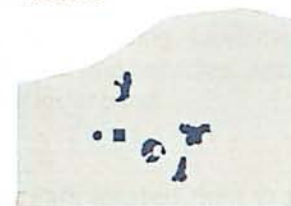
topography



buildings



waters



open spaces



paths



zoning



3.0 Context of Kowloon Park

- Comparison of Hong Kong (Kowloon Park) and Manhattan (Central Park)

Similarity:

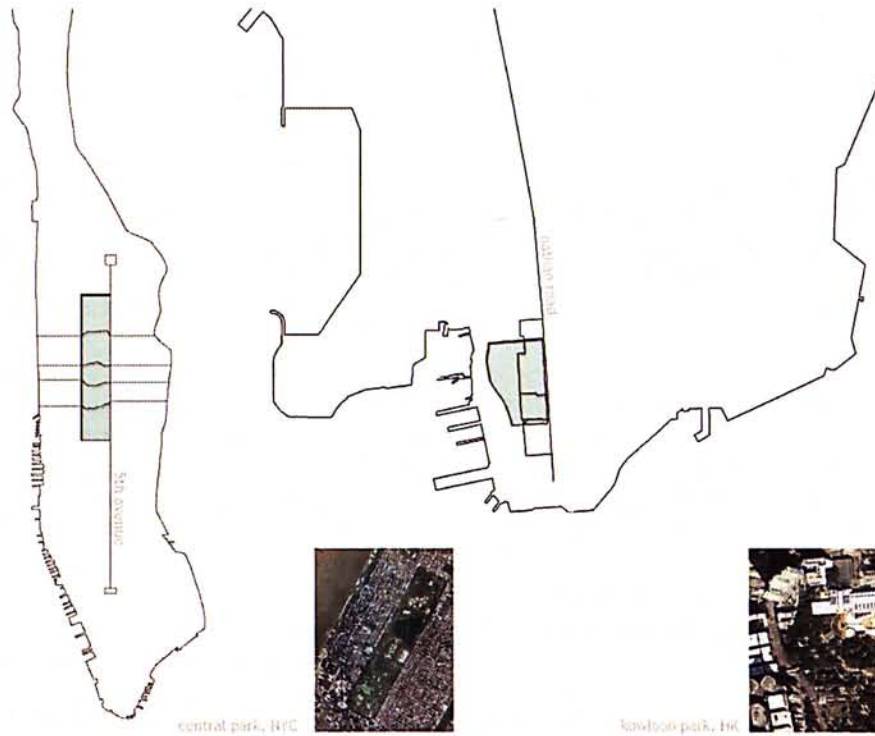
In many ways, Kowloon Park is very similar to Central Park in the New York City regardless of its size. Kowloon Park is attached to the busiest street - Nathan Road - in Hong Kong, while Central Park is right next to the most prosperous street - the 5th Avenue - in Manhattan. Both of them are right in the heart of the city resisting the crazy urban development. Various activities take place around the Parks and the Parks exist as a Micro-city in themselves.

Central Park:

Of course, Central Park is much more intelligently sited in the city as lots of design effort had been put in the Park. It is designed with the Manhattan grid underlied so as to allow maximum crossing. Landscapes are carefully placed to disturbance among people and vehicles. Activities inside the Park are closely linked to activities around...

Kowloon Park:

Meanwhile, it is so beautiful to have Kowloon Park located right in the city centre, however, the present situation of the Park is so weird that it seems completely out of context. It is like an isolated object completely detached from the fabrics. Its underlying opportunities are by no means expressed through this form of urban park.



4.0 Urban Park Ideology

- Park and City

Koolhaas's description of Central Park might be a good example showing the nature of a Park. "Its lakes are artificial, its trees (trans)planted, its accidents engineered, its incidents supported by an invisible infrastructure that control their assembly. A catalogue of natural elements is taken from its original context, reconstituted and compressed into a system of nature..."

Practically, an urban park provides "immediate nature" to people living in the urban environment so that people can escape from the city for while to breathe in some fresh air. However, what is the use and function of an urban park beyond its physical appearance, meaning the ideological point of view?

In the Toronto Downsview Park competition in 2000, the five finalists' team leading by provocative architects stated their own vision towards ideology of urban parks as follow:

"begin with a strategy, never with a form" - Tschumi

"a blueprint that directs the park's activities while managing its own growth" - OMA

provide "a carefully gauged framework" - Corner and Allen

offer "a differentiated but cohesive infrastructure of flexibility"

- FOA

propose "a contemporary template for a co-evolving system of mutual interconnection" - Brown and Storey

Each of the team has their own specific approach towards the design of the Park, but it is not difficult to realize that they all stressed on the idea of some kind of flexibility that allow the Park to change and grow. Indeed, from the often quoted text of Rem Koolhaas "What Ever Happened to Urbanism?" calls for urbanisms based on "the staging of uncertainty," "the irrigation of territories with potential," and "the creation of enabling fields that accommodate processes", it is quite clear that this kind of consideration is quite common.

The fundamental difference between buildings and parks is indeed about growth and change. Buildings are stable, in principle, their physical appearance cannot be changed once the construction finished. On the other hand, landscape are unstable, its physical appearance would change every day after its formal construction. That's why Tschumi said the design of park "begin with a strategy, never with a form". The challenge of building a park is the idea to inaugurate and structure the transformation of the site while remaining open to change and growth over time.

4.0 Urban Park Ideology

- Precedent Studies : Central Park

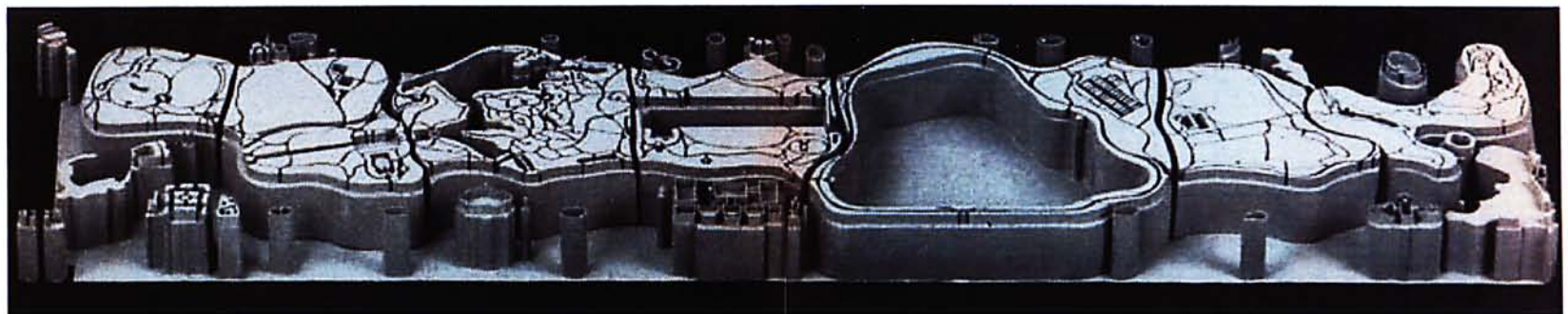
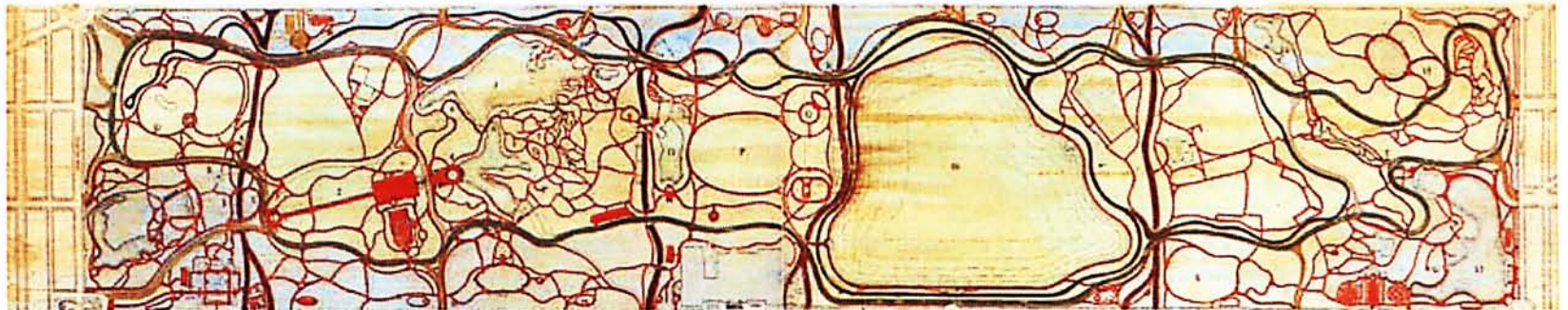
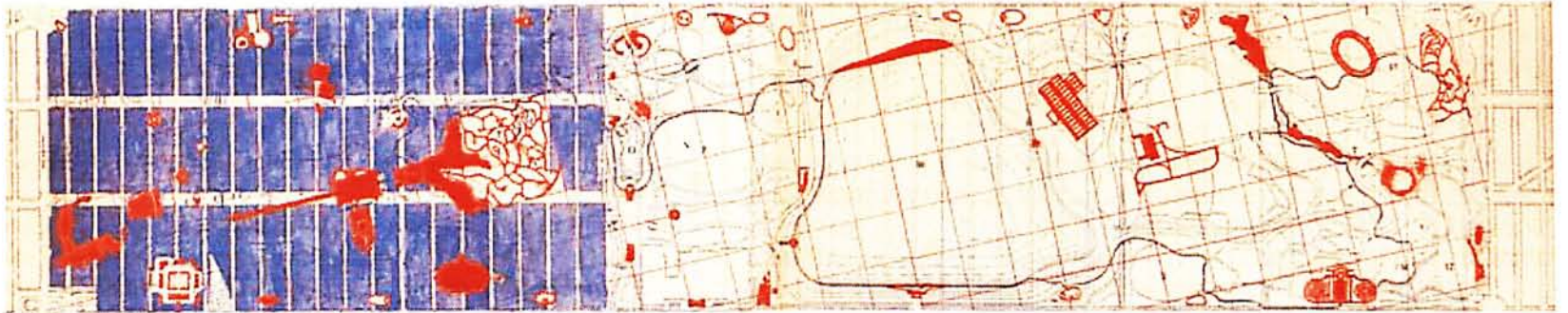
According to Olmsted, the purpose of an urban park is to provide the scenery that most effectively counteracts and cures the nervous disability cause by the urban life; it is an escape from the cramped confined and controlling circumstances of the street.⁴ The Park serves the people of the city to heal psychological damages caused by the city.

Olmsted proposed many components for urban parks. This consisted of Parkways (An axis through the park connecting to the city), Drives, walks (smooth paths with easy grades and gentle curves), places of congregation and rest, boundary arrangements that are not entirely predictable, connections from the park to exterior streets and sequencing of architectural elements of the park.⁵

Central Park is located at the heart of the New York City in where it is sited on a piece of densely occupied land of Manhattan. As Koolhaas's description, Central Park is a synthetic Arcadian Carpet⁶ laid on the metropolitan grid of Manhattan. Its organic nature is so contrast to the rigid, mechanical grid but yet so harmonically sit on the urban fabric of the city. The site itself therefore already proved that Central Park is an escape of cramped city living. People could easily get to this place to enjoy their public life after full days work.

It is almost impossible to not recognize the existence of this huge park in the city when people are in the New York City. All sorts of public transport could lead people to this place. For the Park itself, there are two main entrances from Main Street, but there are also entrances from the neighborhoods on all sides of the park. As we can see from the plan drawn by student from Cooper Union, all the entrances are connected to the grided pattern and the Manhattan grid is actually laying on the plan of Central Park.

Central Park is of course a world class urban park. It is well connected to the city and it attracts lots of people everyday. Although we cannot deny its urban quality to the city, it is still a piece of landscape work, primarily because the project is lead by a landscape architect. Olmsted tried to explore the relationship of park and city through manipulation of the true nature of artificial landscape. The land is carefully massaged to give beautiful settings of scenery and buildings are like plug-in to this cleverly built landscape. This is actually a landscape for landscape's sake approach and perhaps it is also interesting to look at examples that trying to bring in the idea of city to the Park. The next session discussing about Parc de la Villette is a kind of approach that considered Park as a City.



Central Park analysis by student in Cooper Union

4.0 Urban Park Ideology

- Precedent Studies : Parc de la Villette

Parc de la Villette - by Bernard Tschumi

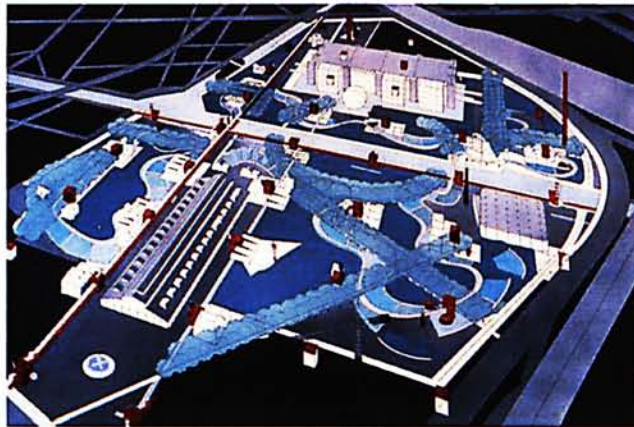
Tschumi simultaneously work on different scales, the surfaces, the lines and the points are elements of various scales. On top of that there are still gigantic volumes being inserted into the park. In the end, elements of different scale collide and interfere each other and everything is tied up by a theoretical scaleless point grid. The project is based on discontinuity of cinematic structure. One could find that there are lots of distorted moments in the Park.

Parc de la Villette - by OMA

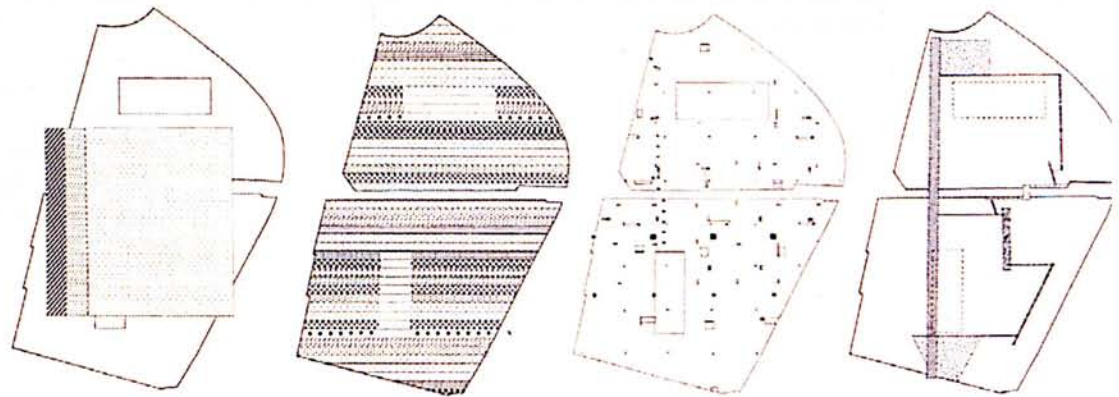
The idea for Rem is taking the major programmatic components to distribute in horizontal bands across the site, creating a continuous atmosphere along its length and perpendicularly, rapid change in experience. The idea is a collision of various scale of activities on one axis, but a continuous scale experience on the other. It is a "programmatic layering upon vacant terrain to encourage dynamic coexistence of activities and to generate through their interference, unprecedented events." The approach aimed at creating a congested situation of the city not necessarily with the crowd.

In both projects, the architects think that an urban park is not just about landscaping. In fact, as we can see from the plans that both architects stress very much on the internal organization of the Park and basically treat that as a city. A "Park City" is not just about nature in the city, but a system that urban life and cultural/natural life collide together.

Although both architects have similar vision towards urban park, they have a very fundamental difference in terms of their approach. Tschumi's approach is about "conflicting" the park and the city while Rem's approach is a "synthesis" between park and city. In Tschumi's project, he is trying to place a hypothetical ground onto the fabric which theoretically has no relationship to the city. He then implement different kinds of system onto this ground and through all kinds of collision and interference, created disjunctions which could be interpreted as distorted moment of the city. While Rem is trying to use very a simple horizontal band system to synthesise the programs around the park with the programs inside the park to create a programmatic indeterminacy. The result is it creates a kind of unstable fusion of the park with the city.



Parc de la Villette - proposal by Bernard Tschumi



Parc de la Villette - proposal by Rem Koolhaas

5.0 Critiques on present Kowloon Park

The reason for our urban parks never function as important places that capture the hearts of local residents is these parks often lack the right combination of physical amenities and activities that make the park a magnet and an important place within a particular community. *

Topographical location

The fact that Kowloon Park is elevated from the ground of the city creates both advantages and disadvantages. As it is elevated, it creates a situation that the Park is both connect to and separated from the city. It belongs to the city because it is right in the activity centre of the city and it is away from the city because it is not easily visible from the city. This conflicting situation sets up opportunities for interesting moments between city and nature, and the possibility for seeing the city in a very different perspective as on the ground.

However, it is obvious that such opportunities are not fully utilized in the present situation. The elevation of the Park only creates a kind of separation in way that what happen inside the Park has no relationship with the outside city. Unlike country parks, an urban is better to be understood as the searching of nature in relationship to the city rather than an escape from the city.

Access and Linkage

1) Path

The urban parks in Hong Kong are rather disconnected to the city. It seems that there are no planning strategies on these parks at all as we can easily find that these parks are either cut out from the city by busy highway or actually surrounded by flyovers. People in the city could hardly find any noticeable entrance to the parks. The same happen in the Kowloon Park. All four sides of the Park are cut off from the city by highways and there is actually no significant path leading people crossing the Park. It would certainly have been a nice experience if the Park could serve as a conjunction to let people drop by before and after works as urban life is so busy in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, it is true that people might still pass through the Park to get to work or the station, but it seems that these paths only serves as short cut and people are just pass-by. There are no designated scenery and activity for these special paths.

5.0 Critiques on present Kowloon Park

2) Edge

As discussed above, the edges of Kowloon Park are either highways or busy street. The only edge that we can find a bit of street life is the Park Lane right next to Nathan Road. But still, it is fairly easy to draw boundary between park and the city, meaning that the present situation of the edges making detachment of the park rather than actively attach the park into the city.

The carelessness in dealing with access and linkage problem is the primary reason for the failure of urban parks in Hong Kong. How can people enjoy the natural scenery when there is no proper way to take people into the parks?

Programmatic arrangement

There are two kinds of program, the internal program of the park and the program around the park. Let us first discuss the internal program structure of a park since there is no way to keep people in when there is nothing to do in the park. It is somehow hard to judge whether the natural sceneries are attractive enough in our urban parks, but generally speaking, there is a lack of designated path in all our cases. From the study of Central Park, we can find that Olmsted put lots of effort to design the path connecting the sceneries. However, in the case of Kowloon Park, it is always found that cars and people are occupying the same path and these paths are seldom well integrated with the sceneries. Of course, there are different kinds of program inside the Park, but they are more or less fragments floating on a big piece of land. There is a lack of collision and crush between different programs to give excitement to the public.

Perhaps the best way to live up the Park is to look at programs and facilities around the parks selectively bring them into the Park. There are all sorts of activities in Tsim Sha Tsui, ranging from retails, restaurants, café, to cinema and high tech zone. It would be very beneficial if some measures could be done to take advantages of these settings and brought some of these activities into Victoria Park. Good programmatic arrangement allows the parks to extent into the city.

6.0 Scale tectonic

- Scale and the thesis statement

Scale

A set of number, amount etc., used to measure or compare the level of something.

The relation between the real size of something and its size on a map, model or diagram.

-Cambridge dictionary

Premise

Scale is always understood in relative sense. It is a system in which the rate at which something is paid varies as a result of other conditions. This thesis is trying to understand cities through study of varies condition of scale extreme and to develop and approach of design through considerations of both the sense of scale and scaleless.

The issue is about the design of an urban park and its scale relationship to the immediate surrounding. The thesis will try to explore the definition of an urban park through a series of scale study based on three theoretical propositions about scale.

- Scale and city

Cities

Taking scale as a framework of study, different cities seem to fit in different scales. For example, the different scale of Manhattan grid and Chicago grid seem to create different city patterns. Manhattan seems to have internal realm inside the well framed grid while Chicago seem to be a collision of different scale of grid. And if we take European cities like Paris and London, they seem to be a whole other story about scale because of those boulevards and open piazza. How do we understand Hong Kong in terms of scale then?

Hong Kong

Urban developments in Hong Kong always follow a top-down construction process, meaning a priority based on scale difference. From an overall abstracted view of city like the networked infrastructure to the design for a single building, the primary benefit of such kind of process is about efficiency. On the other hand, there are internal realities to be investigated which describe how things interact and coordinate in the micro-scale realm that manifest the true spirit of a city. The co-existence of both Macro and Micro realm of city is actually the significance of urban environment of Hong Kong in terms of scale.

the garden city



the broadacre city



the radiant city



the rebuild of london after fire



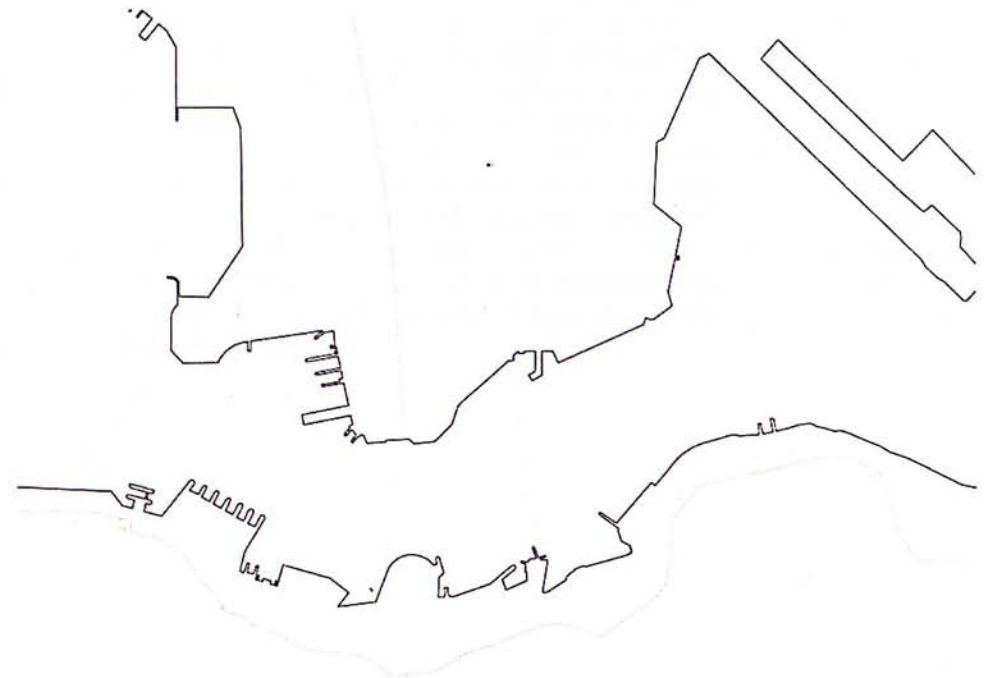
the Haussmann's Paris



the Manhattan grid



PROPOSALS OF ORGANIZING the CITY



6.0 Scale tectonic

- Issues of the site that potentially deal with scale

Context

Tsim Sha Tsui is one of the most fragmented area in Hong Kong crowded with a whole variety of scale extreme. A 1 km by 1 km sample is taken for investigation based on its contextual scale extremes. The result shows that there are always different kinds of fabrics collide to each other, primarily because of the continuous development of the area. The land resource is so tight in Tsim Sha Tsui that every redevelopment of building will tend to go higher and bigger in order to obtain a highest usable floor area, resulting in the collision of gigantic office/commercial towers and tiny tenement buildings. The idea of scale extreme become so obvious just looking at the fabric itself and it is even more interesting that there exists such a piece of scaleless green on top of the disordered "ground cover". This piece of scaleless is tied to different scale of neighborhoods around it offers an opportunity that "uncontrolled scale collisions happening all around could actually be organized by the most scaleless element - the landscape".

Program

Within the 1 km by 1 km site, we can also find interesting programmatic collision. For example, the harbour plaza looks like a few big buildings put together from the outside. However, seen from the inside, it is an even more gigantic shopping mall that is linked all together. Because of the need for more environmentally controlled spaces, all sorts of shopping mall, arcade, shops in Tsim Sha Tsui started to link together internally to form a unified interior although they look like different buildings from the outside. In contrast to the bigness of interior, there are also examples like the Chong Ching Mansion that inside the gigantic building are all those small clusters individual stores. This phenomenon of big buildings having small interiors or small buildings having big interiors creates a very interesting conflict between scale of building and scale of space. Question start to come out after all these analyses. How should the gigantic urban park be programmed? Should it be clustered or just one big interior? It is on these two regards that scale became a core idea of this study.



As seen by the area is densely packed with buildings of city. Various scale mixtures are found in the city.



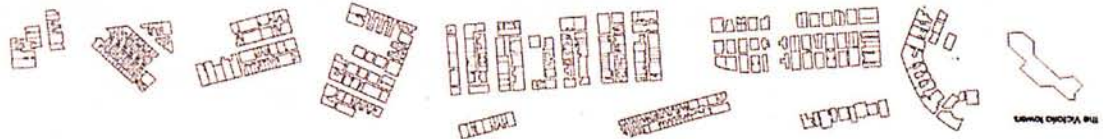
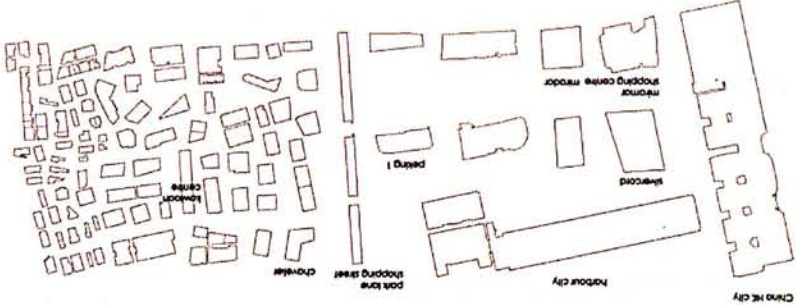
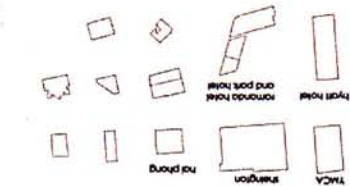
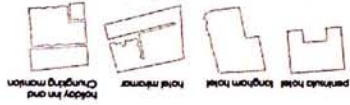
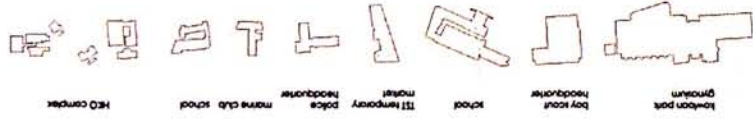
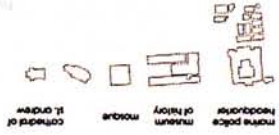
Scale extremes

Scale extremes

Scale extremes

Scale extremes

scale extremes



6.0 Scale tectonic

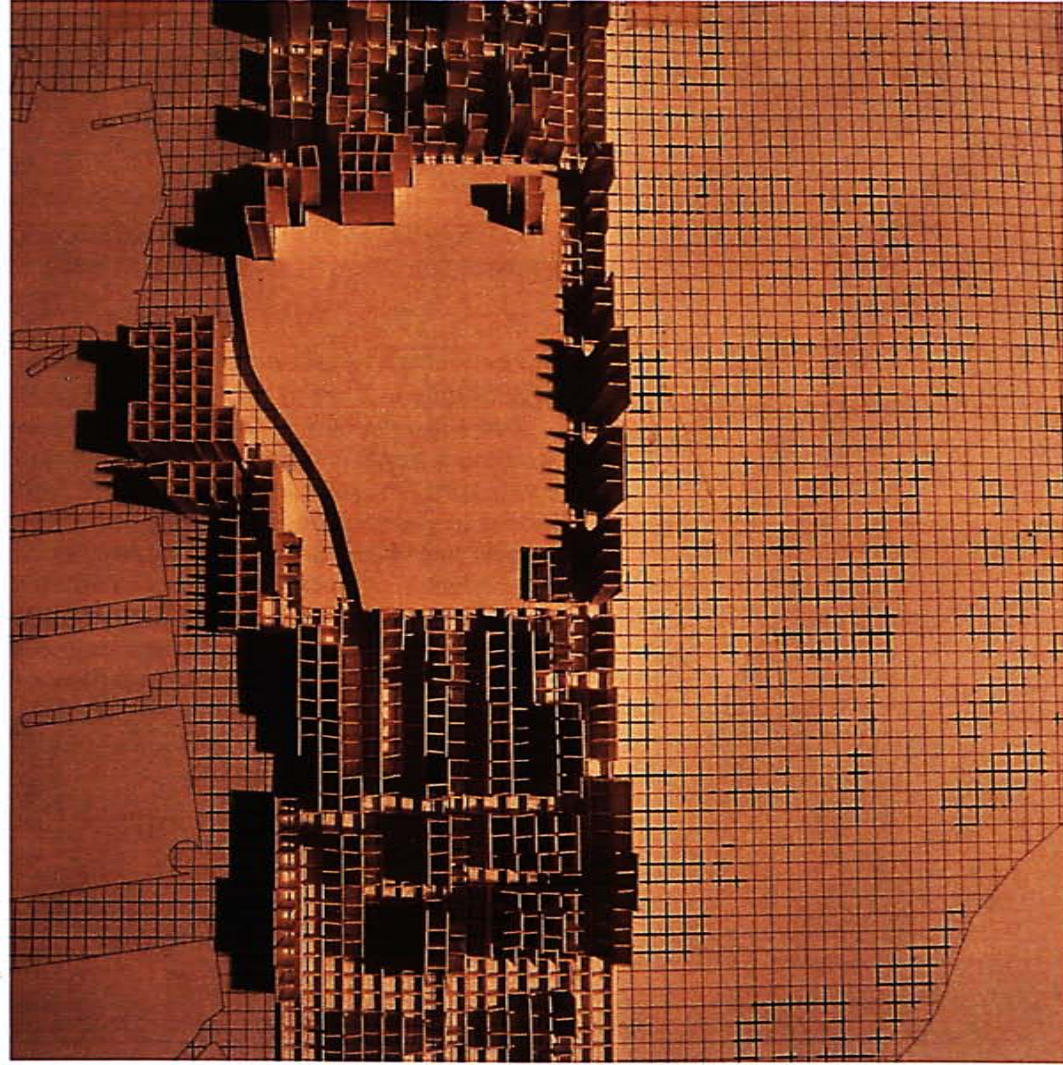
- Theoretical proposition

36 views of Mount Fuji - by Hokusai

Hokusai had worked on the paintings for ten years before it actually go into publication. He travelled around Japan to take actually 46 views of Mount Fuji in various aspects. Sometimes foreground, sometimes background, sometimes being the scene, these paintings on Mount Fuji presents a very interesting aspect about viewing the same image from various spots giving various impression of scale.

The idea of "36 views of Mount Fuji" seems to be about a kind of scalelessness. It is about a totally symmetrical object being observed and perceived in different perspectives and different distances. The Mount Fuji itself is such a gigantic volume that it is almost scaleless. A sense of scale is actually created by peoples' movement and viewing angle/distance. The relationship of the city and scale in this case is very much about the land form itself. A model is constructed based on the idea of "building as topography". The cityscape is conceptualized as a kind of continuous land form and different parts of the city might have different perception of the Kowloon Park. The Kowloon Park is almost a reverse of the Mount Fuji as it is a gigantic void rather than a monumental object in the city.





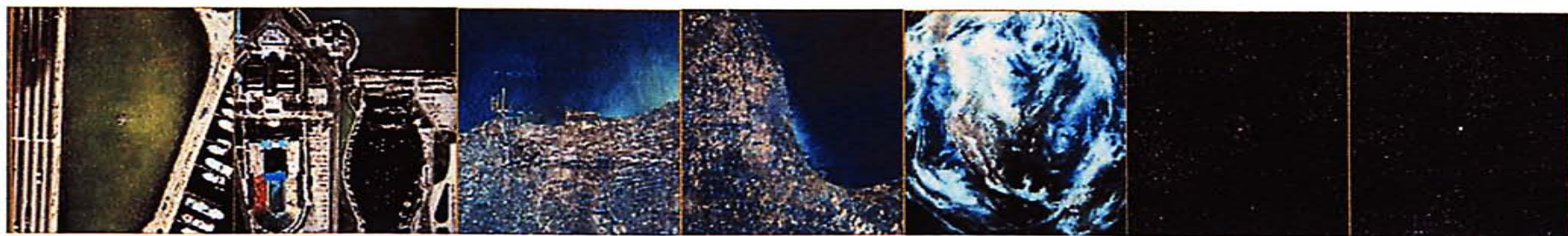
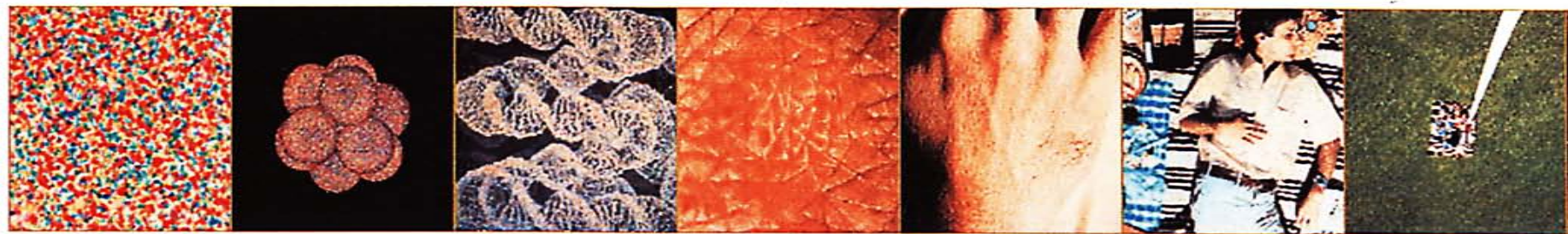
6.0 Scale tectonic

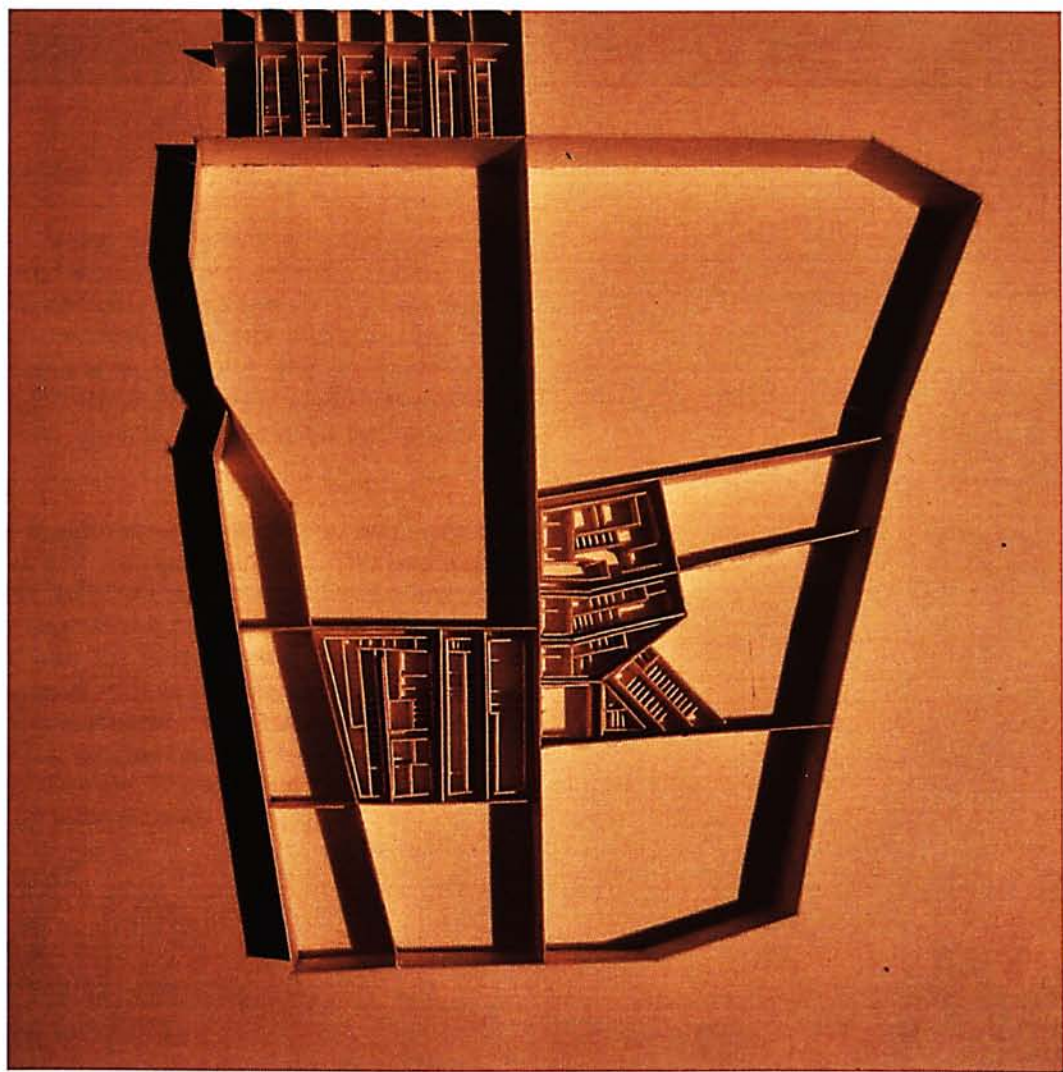
- Theoretical proposition

Power of ten - by Eame's office

"...knowledge of scale gives us the perspective to see all things in terms of relative size. It gives us a sense of place in the universe and expands our thinking in non-linear ways".

The idea of "Power of Ten" is more about system within system. From the set of images we can find that in every system, there is another bigger system that is holding it: a hand belongs to a man, a man sleep in a park... In a way everything is connected. The sense of scale is about a progression from large to small or small to large. It is interesting that throughout the series of image, we can experience some kind of elasticity of space, meaning that in some cases, the content of the image might not change too much although the scale of the image had shifted. The model here is about analysis on the network system of the area. It is trying to conceptualize the existing network system into a kind of image that one system holding the other. We could always go inside and inside.





6.0 Scale tectonic

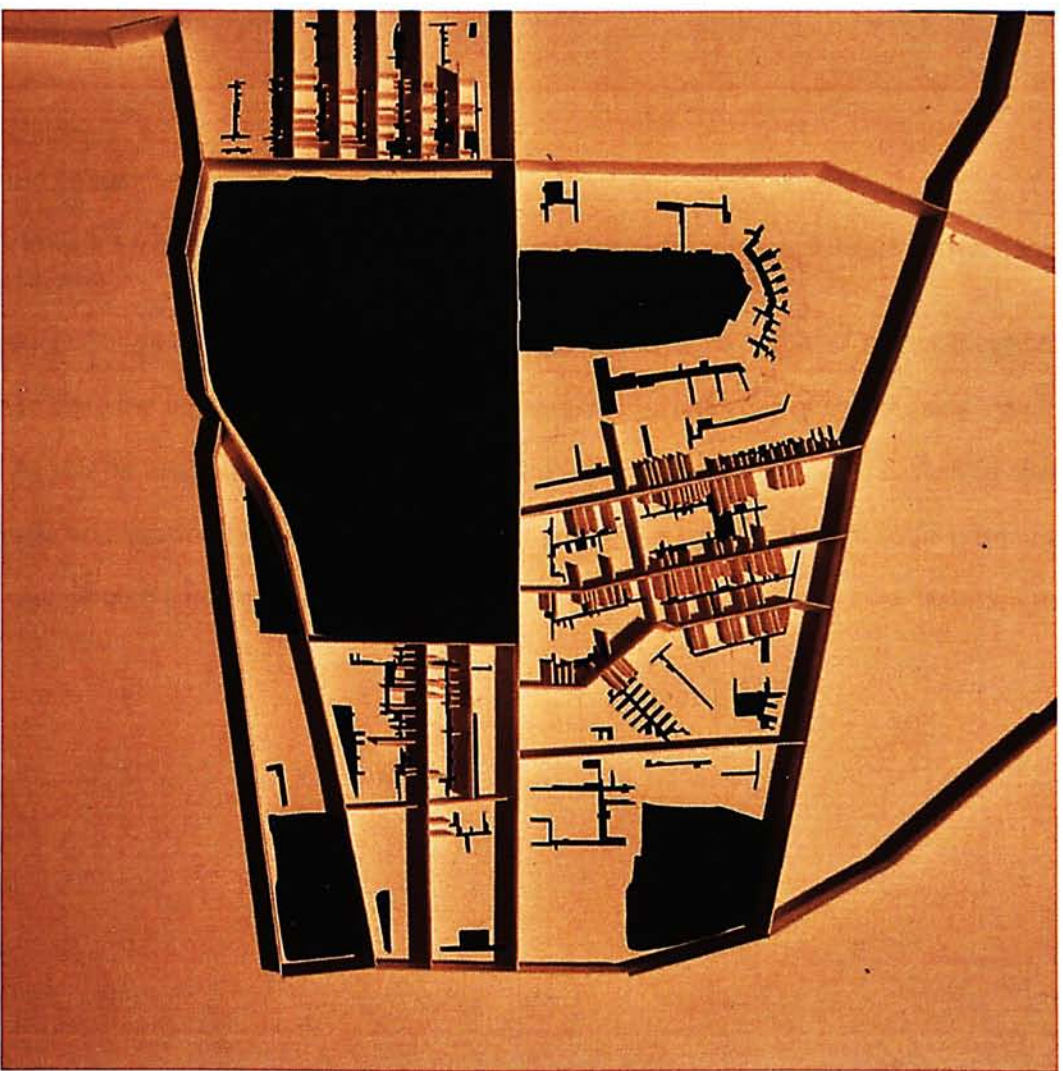
- Theoretical proposition

Chicago Auditorium - Louis Sullivan

"Ornament and structure were integral; their subtle rhythm sustained a high emotional tension, yet produced a sense of serenity. But the building's identity resided in the ornament. It was the spirit animating the mass and flowing from it, and it expressed the individuality of the building. Nurtured by the artist's sympathy with life, the ornament spoke: it was the voice of the artist and the building -- indeed they were one, the building a 'stock personality' and the architect an interpreter and prophet."¹⁰

Louis Sullivan's idea is about simultaneously working on two drastically different scale, building tower and organic ornaments. The two systems imply very different nature of buildings but Louis Sullivan managed to put the two together into harmony. One is certainly very regular because the building had to be fitted into the Chicago grid, while the other is very organic, irregular and natural as it is developed from nature. The interesting thing is the two is put together with the same study on the Chicago grid. The model here is trying to represent the two different systems in the area, the grid and the void. The void is actually an irregular system that is formed based on the existence of the grid.





7.0 Vision

The essence of this project could be summarized as follow:

- the existence of Kowloon Park in such a location is very unique because it creates an interesting dialogue between the notion of city (fabrics - scaled) and notion of nature (landscape - scaleless)
- the design of Kowloon Park would offer an opportunity to tied up and reorganize different 'scale' of fabrics (neighborhood) around the Park
- the Park itself should be able to state the definition of an urban park, whether it is conflicting or synthesizing the city or any other approach
- the design of the Park should be able to inaugurate and structure the transformation of the site while remaining open to change and growth of the Park
- the contextual and programmatic organization of the Park would be informed by the consideration of scale extremes around the area
- the notion of scale would be used as both a conceptual idea and tectonic idea to re-address the issue of "Kowloon Park as an urban park"

8.0 Design proposal (experiment)

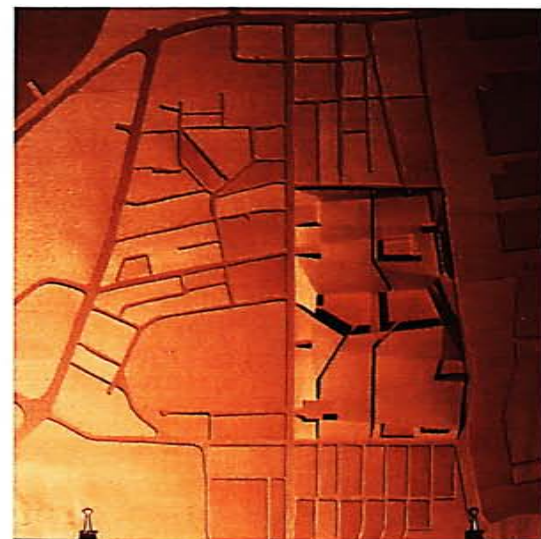
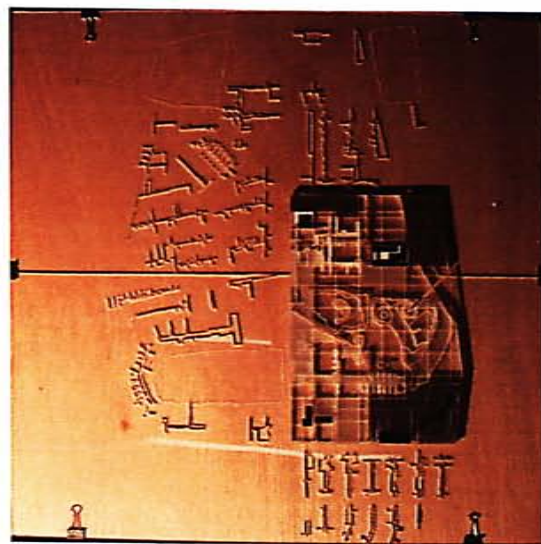
Indeed, this section should not be called as conclusion since these are just experimental design proposals based on the above discussion. Clearly, the designs are just simplified versions and they are not thoughtful enough.

These design proposals are based on the above three theoretical propositions, each testing on an ideal occasion of the possible landform.

8.0 Design proposal (experiment)

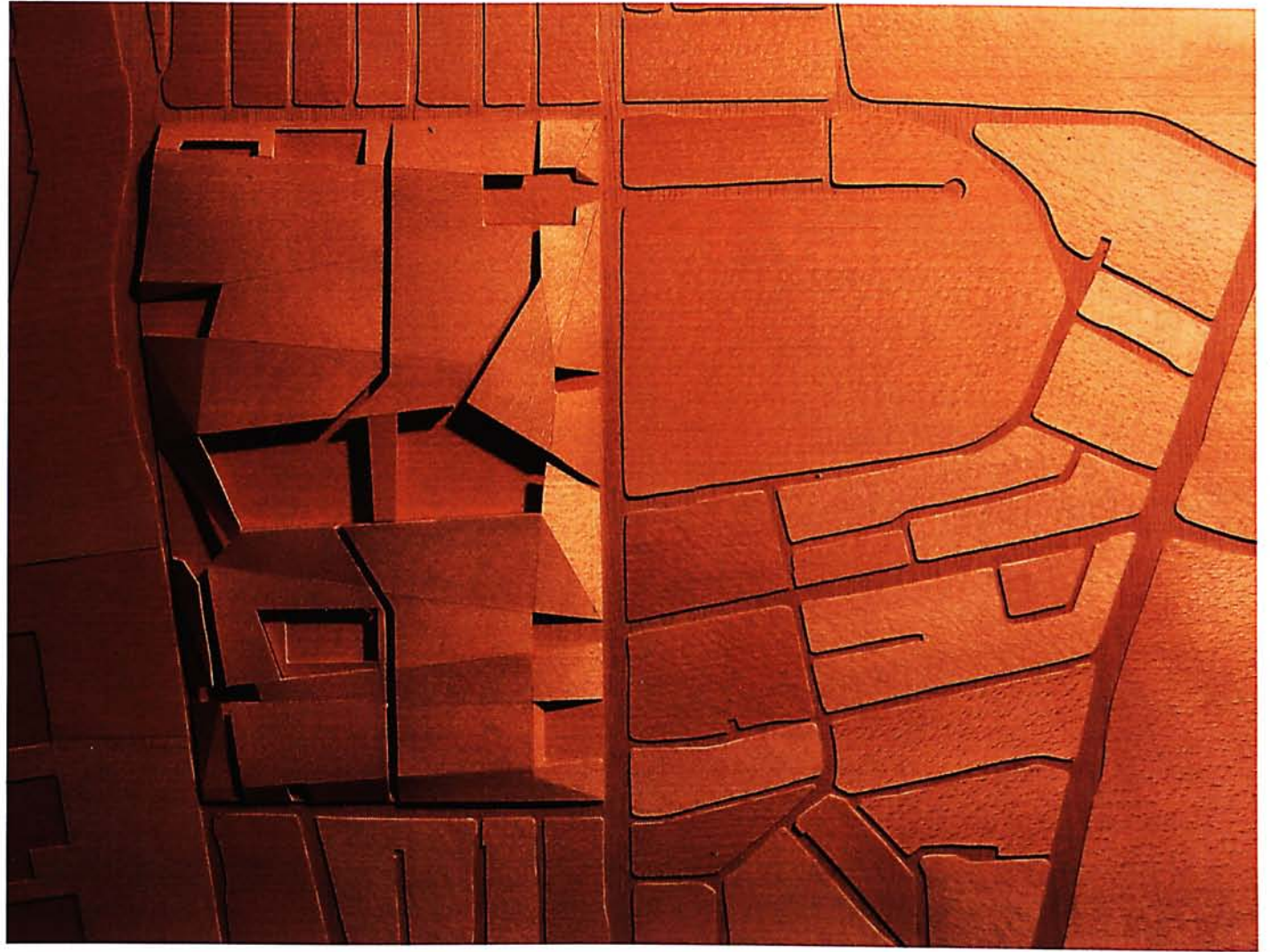
Indeed, this section should not be called as conclusion since these are just experimental design proposals based on the above discussion. Clearly, the designs are just simplified versions and they are not thoughtful enough.

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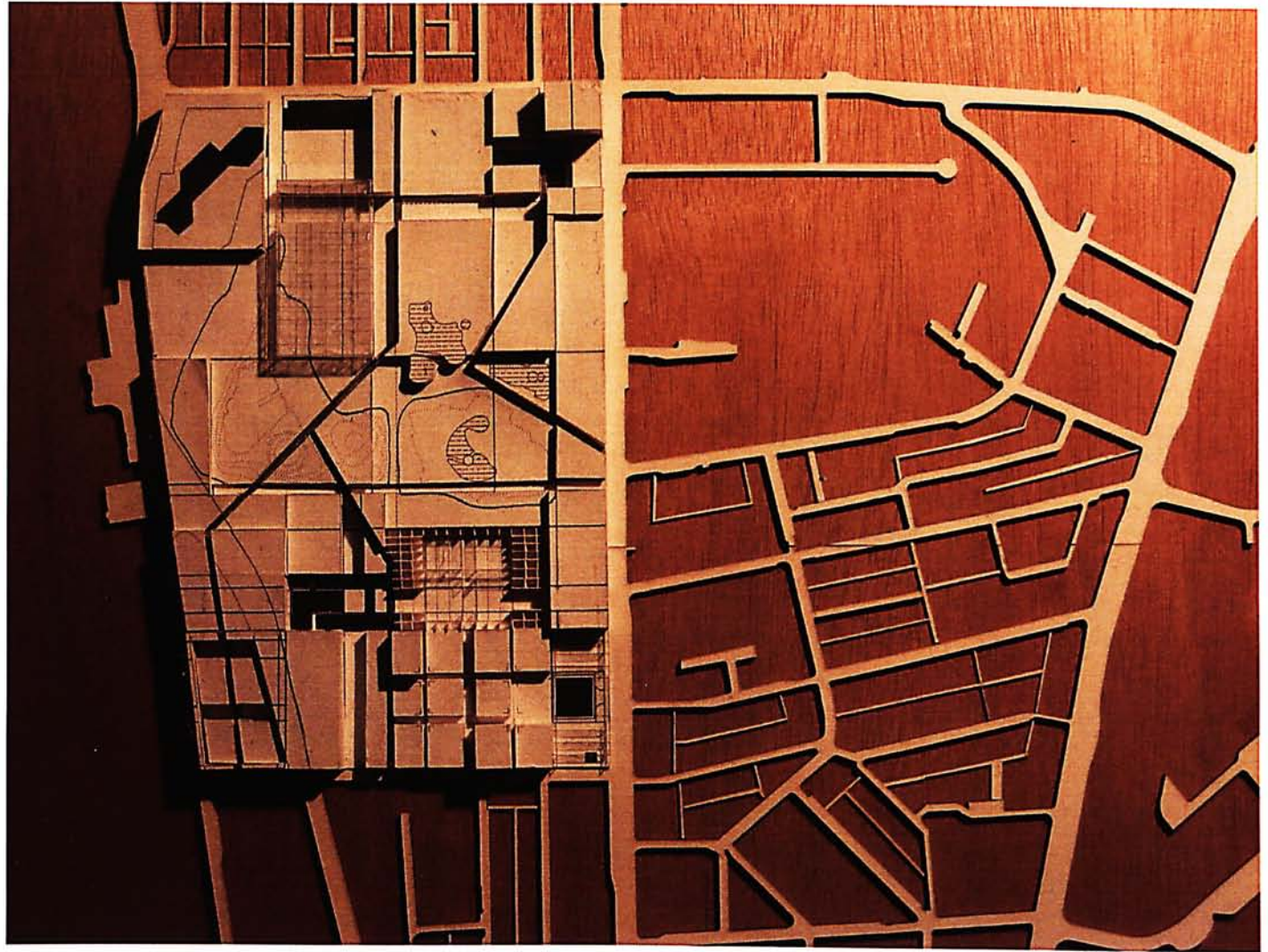


8.0 Conclusion

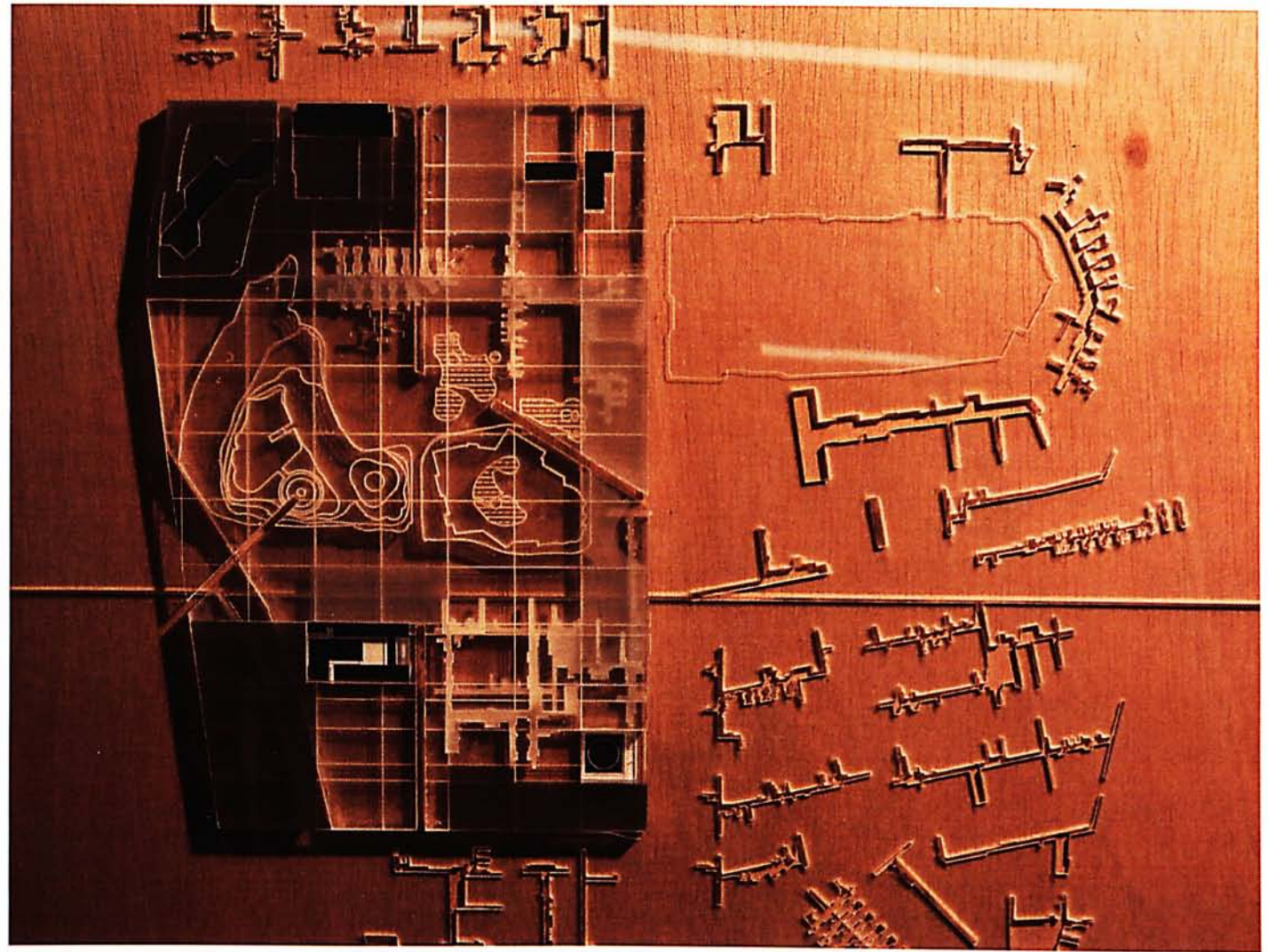
Design proposal (experiment) :
36 views of Mount Fuji

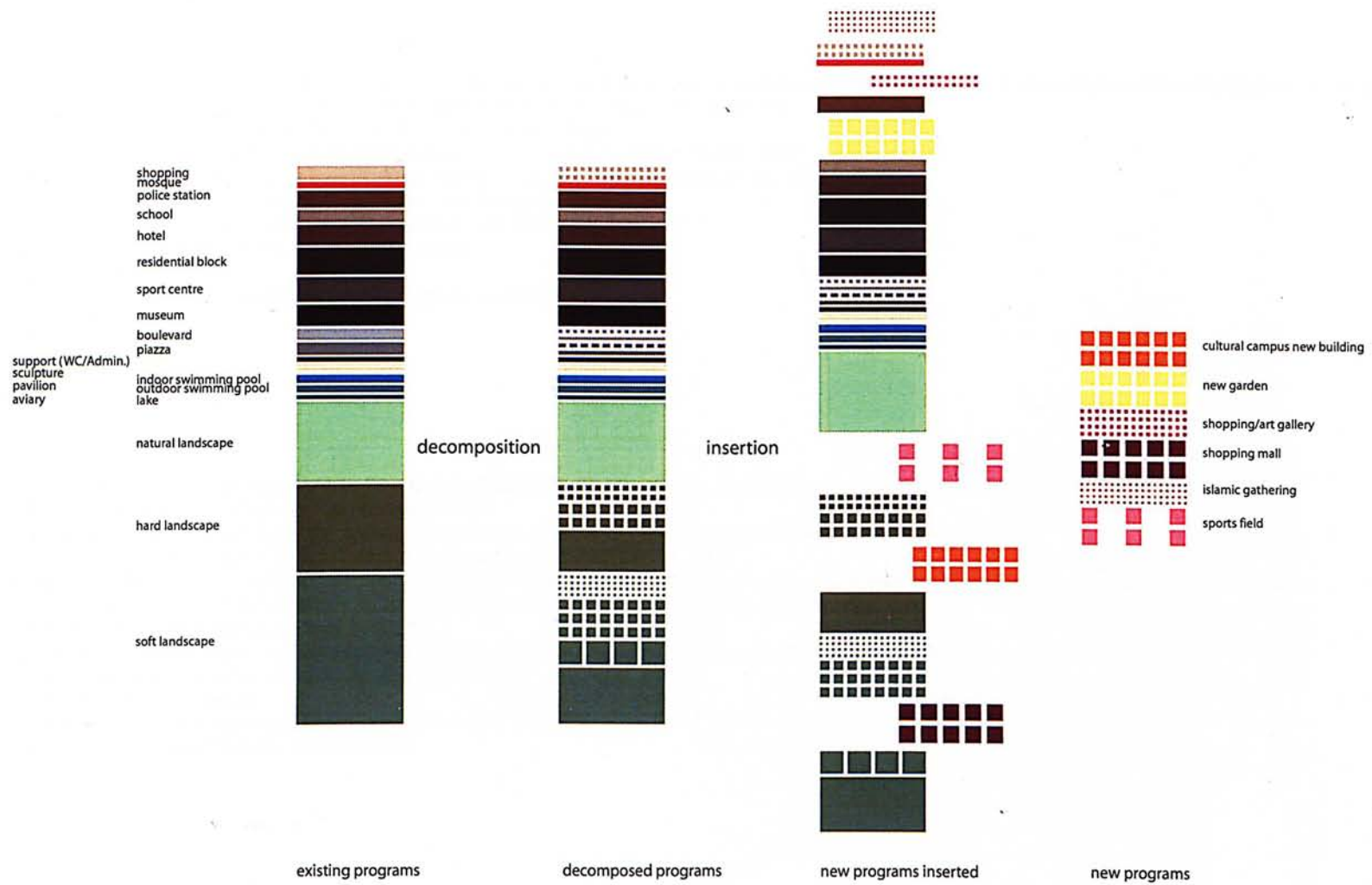


8.0 Conclusion
Design proposal (experiment) :
Power of Ten



8.0 Conclusion
Design proposal (experiment) :
Louis Sullivan





program chart

Notes

1. p.30 The Psychological effect of Landscape, Frederick Law Olmsted-designing the American Landscape, Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, Universe
2. Which direction for our Parks? , Kathy Madden and Benjamin Fried, <http://www.pps.org>
3. p.23 Carpet, Delirious New York, Rem Koolhaas, The Monacelli Press
4. p 3-18, The Papers of Fredrick Law Olmsted, London; John Hopkins University Press, 1997
5. p 80 -103, The Papers of Fredrick Law Olmsted, London; John Hopkins University Press, 1997
6. p.24 Carpet, Delirious New York, Rem Koolhaas, The Monacelli Press
7. p.73 Content, AMOMA, Rem Koolhaas, Simon Brown, Jon Link, TASCHEN
8. Good Places, newsletter of the Urban Park Institute
9. www.poweroften.com
10. <http://www.ci.chi.il.us/Landmarks/Architects/Sullivan.html>

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1. Central Park, an American Masterpiece, Sara Cedar Miller, Harry N. Abrams, Inc, Publishers, in association with the Central Park Conservancy
2. Delirious New York, Rem Koolhaas, The Monacelli Press
3. Frederick Law Olmsted-designing the American Landscape, Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, Universe
4. The Papers of Fredrick Law Olmsted, London; John Hopkins University Press, 1997
5. Budapest and New York, Studies in Metropolitan Transformation: 1870-1930, edited by Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schirske, Russell Sage Foundation
6. Possible Urban Word, Urban Strategies at the End of 20th Century, Birkhauser Verlag, Basel.Boston.Berlin
7. Urban Design as Public Policy, Barnett Jonathan
8. Post-modern city and space, edited by Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson, Blackwell, Oxford UK and Cambridge USA
9. Private Enterprise and Public Benefit, Bannett Johnson
10. HK Lab, Map Book Publishers
11. Content, AMOMA, Rem Koolhaas, Simon Brown, Jon Link, TASCHEN
12. CASE: Downsview Park Toronto, Julia Czerniak

Design Work - Synthetic Landscape

1.0 Thesis Statement

This thesis is about study of Parks. Conventionally speaking, parks contain all the qualities that is opposite to the city, openness, nature, leisure experience...Going to park is always regarded as an escape from the city. Urban parks as a typology presents a very different situation because it is located right in the heart of the city. Few people is going to spend their whole day inside an urban park so as to escape from the city. It becomes intereseting to question what qualites an urban park should be.

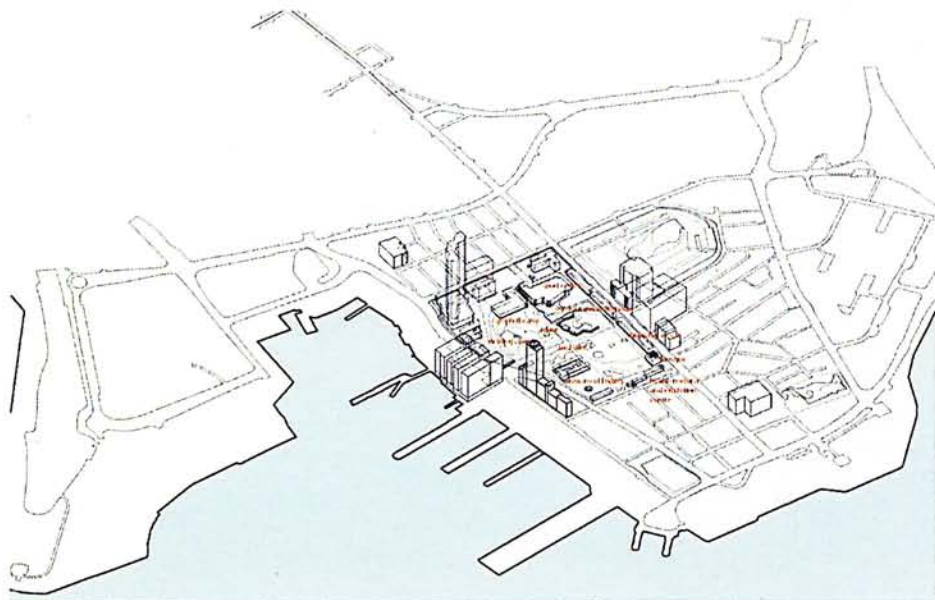
This thesis begins with a hypothesis that urban park should be hyper social rather than detached from the city. In this thesis, I want to challenge the conventional condition of parks being just an open green in the city. I believe urban parks could be syntheze with the city to create a new condition.

I studied the Parc de la Villette by both Bernard Tschumi and Rem Koolhaas. It is very interesting that the two architects took a very contradicting approach. Bernard Tschumi use the point grid, line and surface system to create a contrast with the city. The park has almost no relationship with the city fabric and sets up a contradicting dialogue with city. Whilst Koolhaas use a kind of unified banding system to syntheze the park and the city. The question becomes where should the design be situated between these two extreme approach...

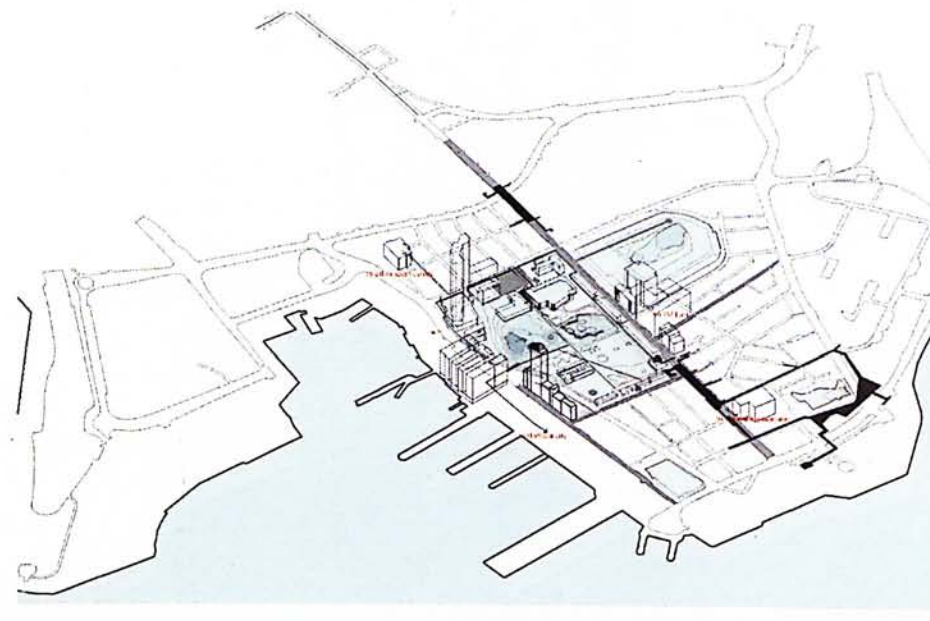
2.0 Site Strategies

Kowloon park was chosen as a sample to illustrate these ideas. It was chosen because it is located right in the heart of Tsim Sha Tsui which is one of the busiest commercial and cultural centre. It has the opportunity to create new relationship between landscape and city. It was chosen also because its intimate relationship with Nathan Road and the a list of strange eclectic element of the city.

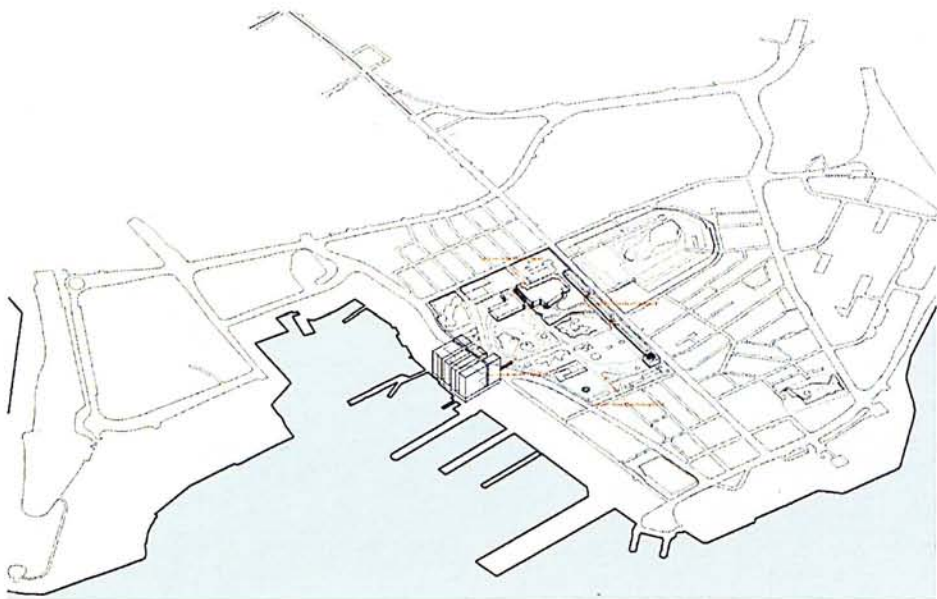
It has a kind of similarity with the Central Park and the 5th Avenue in way that park support the function of the busiest street in the city. However, Kowloon park is at present very detached from the city because its all four sides are bounded by highways and it is elevated from the city.



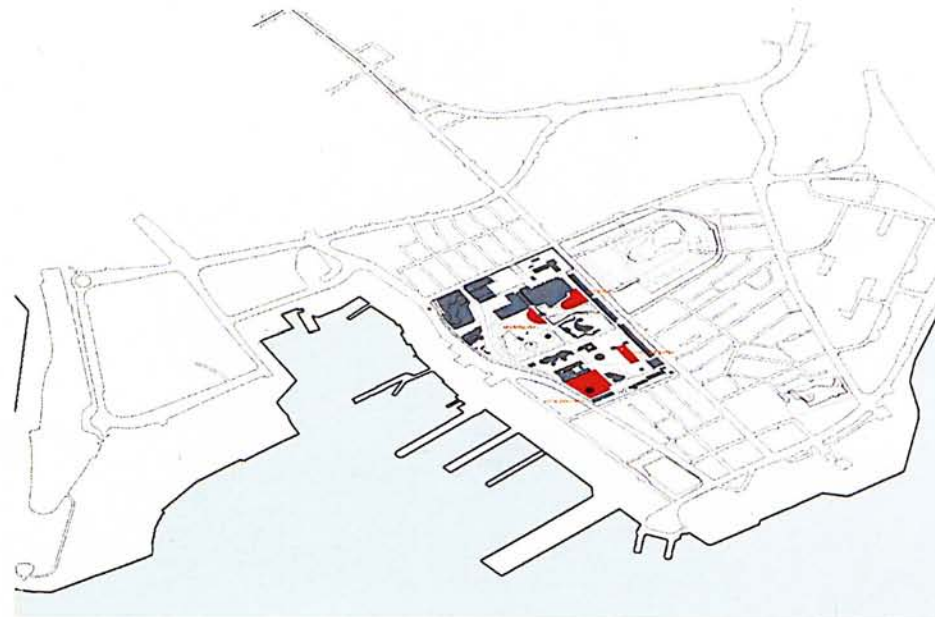
Existing condition of Kowloon Park
- eclectic programs and objects



Existing condition of Kowloon Park
- connection to the city



Existing condition of Kowloon Park
- undefined major access

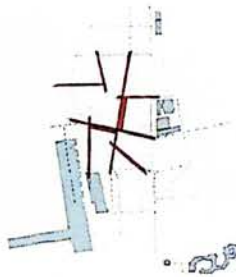


Existing condition of Kowloon Park
- inefficeint use of open green

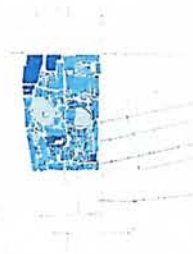
Park as a cultural hub to
connect the cultural
activities



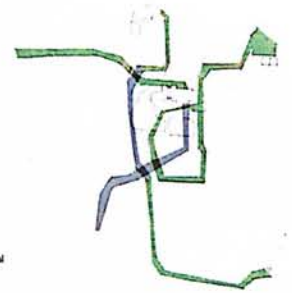
Park as link to shopping
network



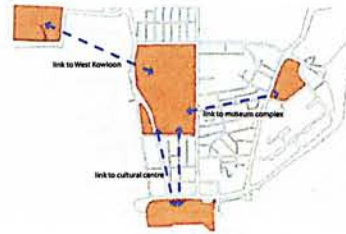
Park as a low-rise
residence



Park as a landscape
emergence of athletical
programs



Testing on Idea of Program



Larger site context



Existing site condition

3.0 Mater Planning

The first move of this project is to change the form of the park. The width of the park is reduced and instead the park extended as a line. The reasons for having such change are

- a) to avoid deep greenery inside a big park which could hardly be utilised from the city
- b) to facilitate active development of the city along the park in order to create a more intimate relationship between park and city

The Park is now transformed from an isolated island which is bounded by strong edges to a line of green that itself is a highly penetratable edge.

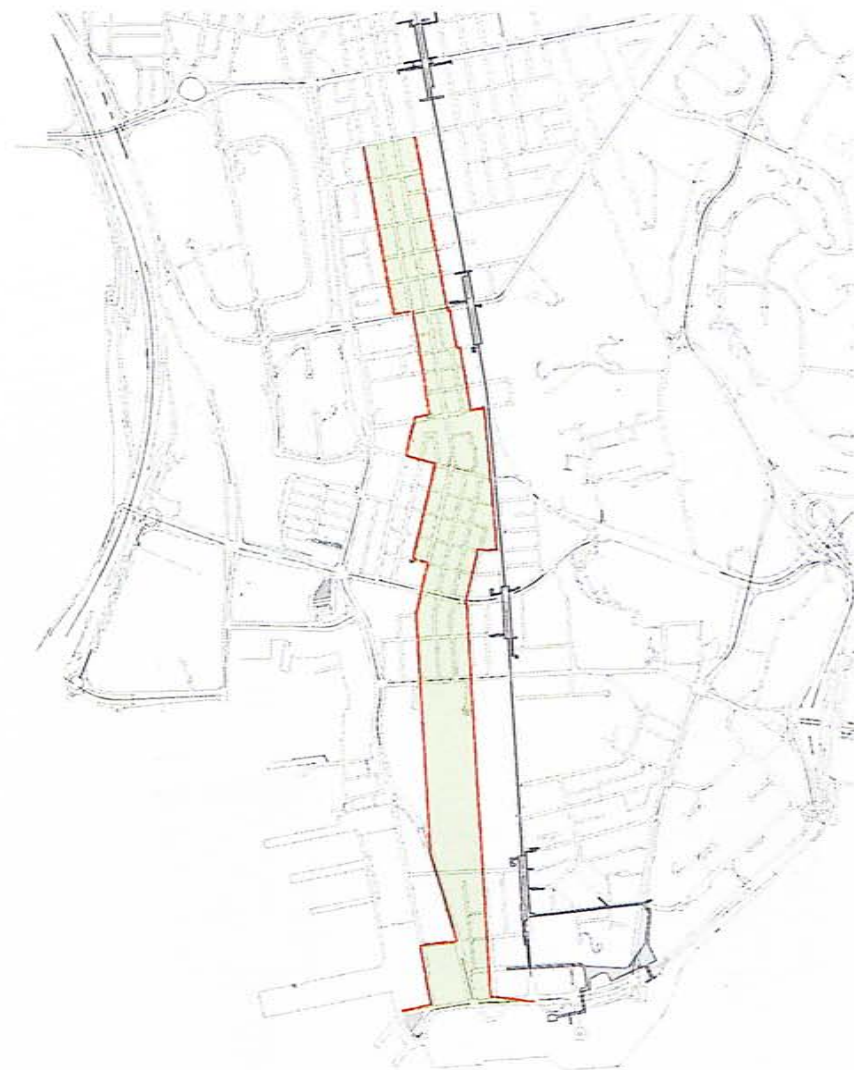
A phasing approach is taken to formulate the transformation of Kowloon Park. Basically, the redevelopment of Kowloon Park is divided into three phases according to three unique area in Kowloon, Jordan, Yau Ma Tei and Mongkok. The development is based on a rule that only 35 years old building would be torn down in order to free up space for the Park.

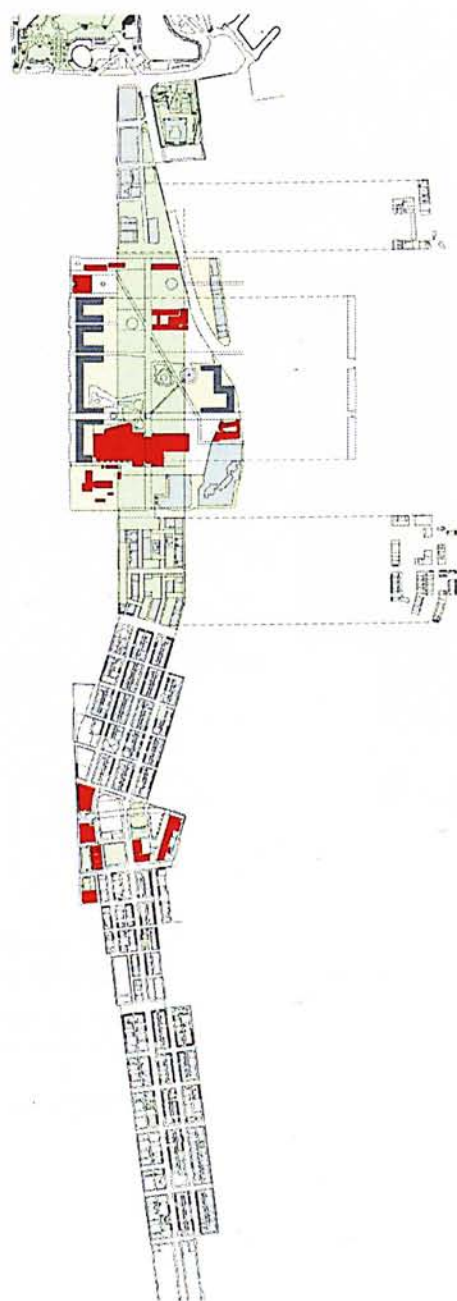
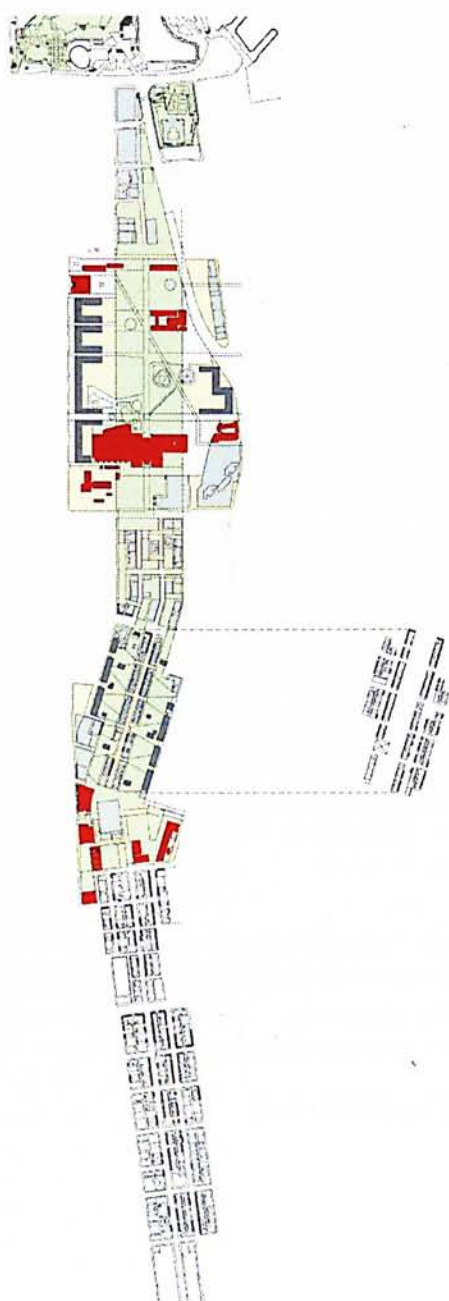
The first phase used a land exchange policy. As the width of the Park is reduced, land along both sides of the existing Kowloon Park is now free for commercial development in exchange of the land obtained from tearing down building in Jordan.

The second phase is about housing redevelopment in Yau Ma Tei. The temple street is preserved as a living museum while a large piece of land is reserved as green area. New buildings are getting higher in order to accomodate the original plot ratio.

The last phase is about a change in the zoning policy. Old buildings are replaced by new buildings with higher plot ratio, but with a requirement to provide a few stories of public green area in the buildings.

The idea of phasing is to transform the park into a kind of active landscape that has the potential to set up better resonance with the city, creating a landscaped infrastructure parallel to Nathan Road that separate pedestrian traffic and vehicle traffics.





PHASE 1 : LAND EXCHANGE

TEARING DOWN 40 YEARS OLD BUILDINGS

TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (RESIDENTIAL) = 13000 sq.m.

TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 2500 sq.m.

TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (COMMERCIAL) = 7300 sq.m.

TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 1150 sq.m.



TEARING DOWN 30 YEARS OLD BUILDINGS

TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (RESIDENTIAL) = 18060 sq.m.

TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 2100 sq.m.

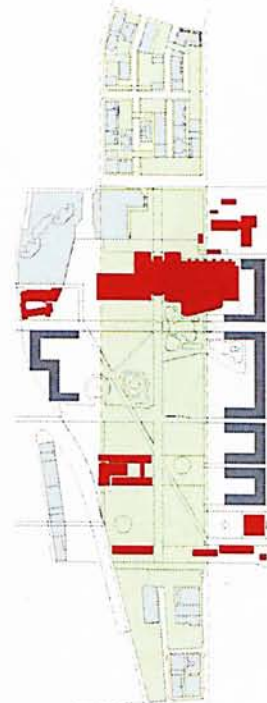
TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (COMMERCIAL) = 11685 sq.m.

TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 1530 sq.m.



CONSEQUENCE

THROUGH A LAND EXCHANGE PROCESS, AROUND 30000 sq.m. OF LAND IS OBTAINED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN EXCHANGE OF 7000 sq.m. OF LAND FOR GREEN, MEANING THAT A PLOT RATIO OF 1.6 SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THIS NEW PIECE OF LAND IN ORDER TO PROVIDE DWELLING FOR THE SAME AMOUNT OF POPULATION.

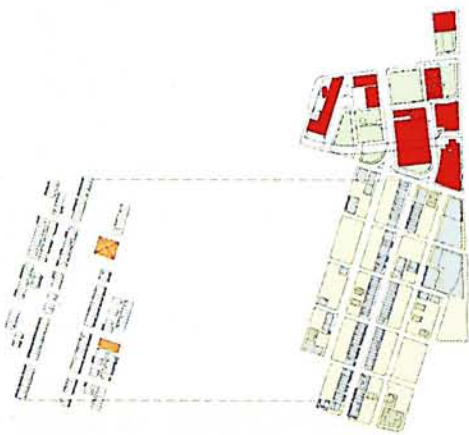


ASSUMING THE PLOT IS PUSH TO 2.0 AS A BENEFIT FOR THIS DEVELOPMENT, AND THE SITE COVERAGE OF THIS PARTICULAR DEVELOPMENT IS SET TO 20%, THE NEW BUILDINGS AROUND KOWLOON PARK WOULD THEN HAVE A 10 STORIES HEIGHT.

PHASE 2 : HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

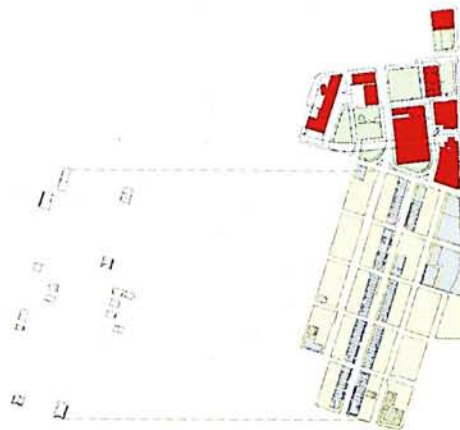
TEARING DOWN 40 YEARS OLD BUILDINGS

TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (RESIDENTIAL) = 48700 sq.m.
TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 9740 sq.m.



TEARING DOWN 30 YEARS OLD BUILDINGS

TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (RESIDENTIAL) = 15600 sq.m.
TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 2400 sq.m.



CONSEQUENCE

AS THE ROADS ARE ABSORBED , AN EXTRA PIECE OF LAND OF 3000 sq.m. IS OBTAINED, GIVING A PLOT RATIO OF 4.2 FOR THIS HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.



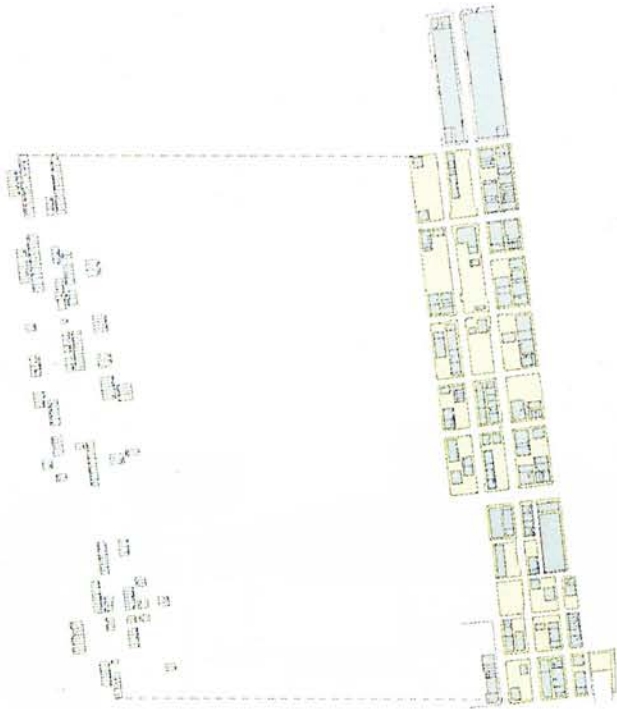
OPTION 1: SITE COVERAGE = 20%

THE NEW HOUSING SHOULD BE
AROUND 21 STORIES HIGH.



OPTION 2: SITE COVERAGE = 30%

THE NEW HOUSING SHOULD BE
AROUND 14 STORIES HIGH.

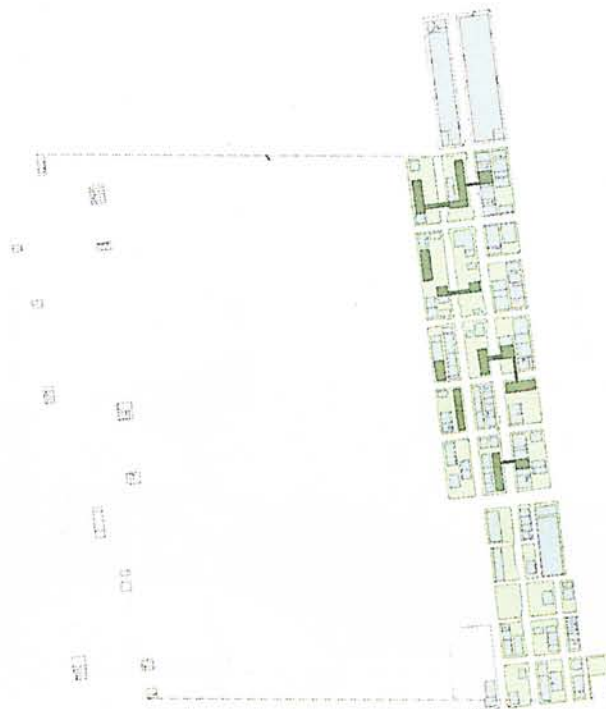


PHASE 3 : ZONING POLICY

TEARING DOWN 40 YEARS OLD BUILDINGS

TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (RESIDENTIAL) = 60880 sq.m.

TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 11070 sq.m.



TEARING DOWN 30 YEARS OLD BUILDINGS

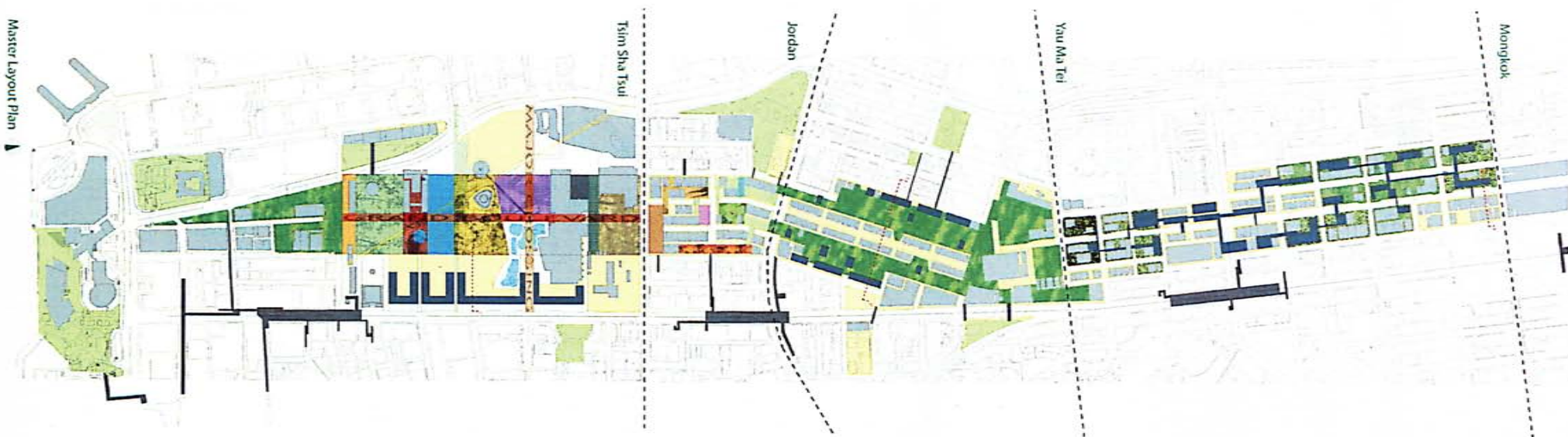
TOTAL FLOOR AREA BEING DEMOLISHED (RESIDENTIAL) = 16875 sq.m.

TOTAL SITE AREA OBTAINED = 2150 sq.m.



CONSEQUENCE

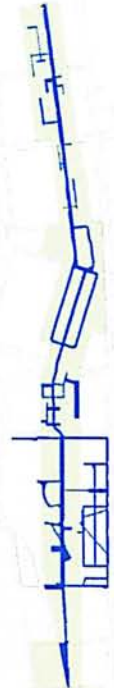
BY CALCULATION, A PLOT RATIO OF 6 SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THIS SITE TO HOUSE THE ORIGINAL AMOUNT OF POPULATION, HOWEVER, TO FACILITATE THE PARK EXTENSION, A PLOT RATIO OF 7.5 IS GIVEN TO THIS SITE IN EXCHANGE OF 2-3 STORIES OF GREEN AREA WITHIN THE NEW BUILDINGS ERECTED. ASSUMING THE SITE COVERAGE IS 50%, THE NEW BUILDINGS WOULD BE AROUND 10-15 STORIES HIGH, DEPENDING ON HOW MUCH GREEN THE DEVELOPER PROVIDE.

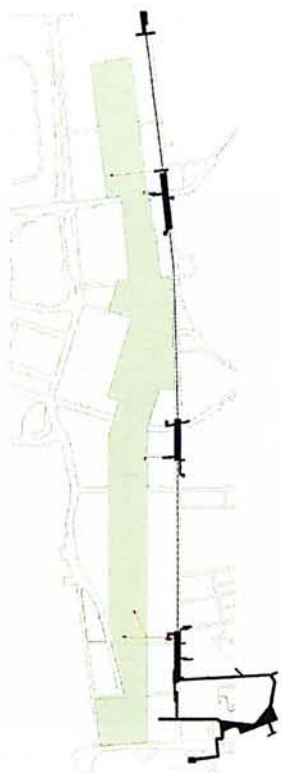


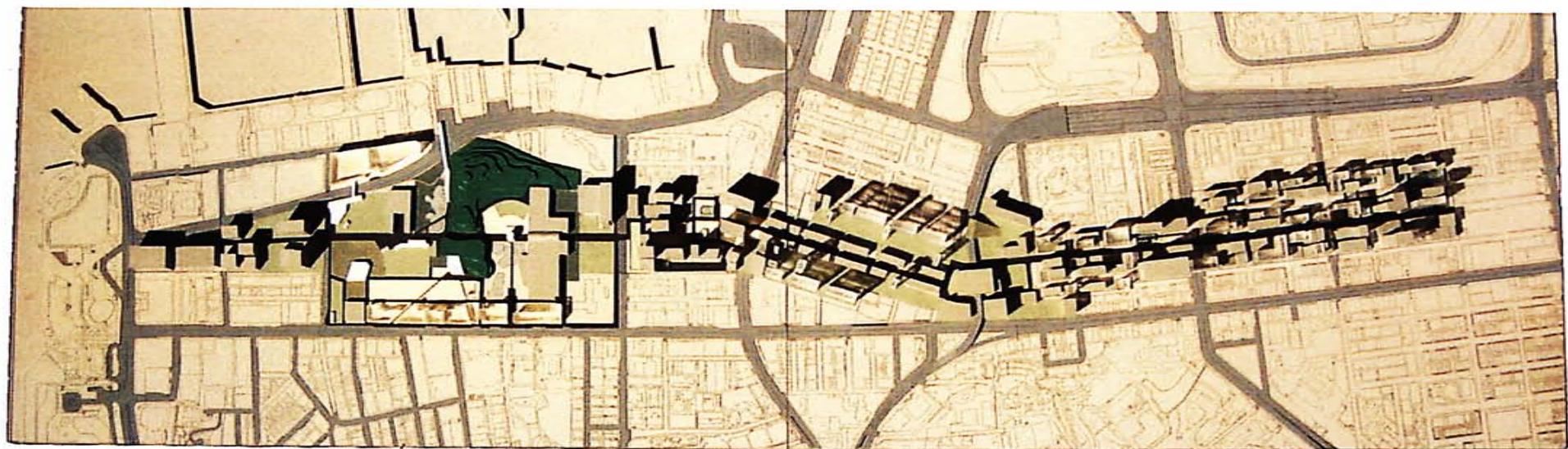
Master layout

Planning strategies

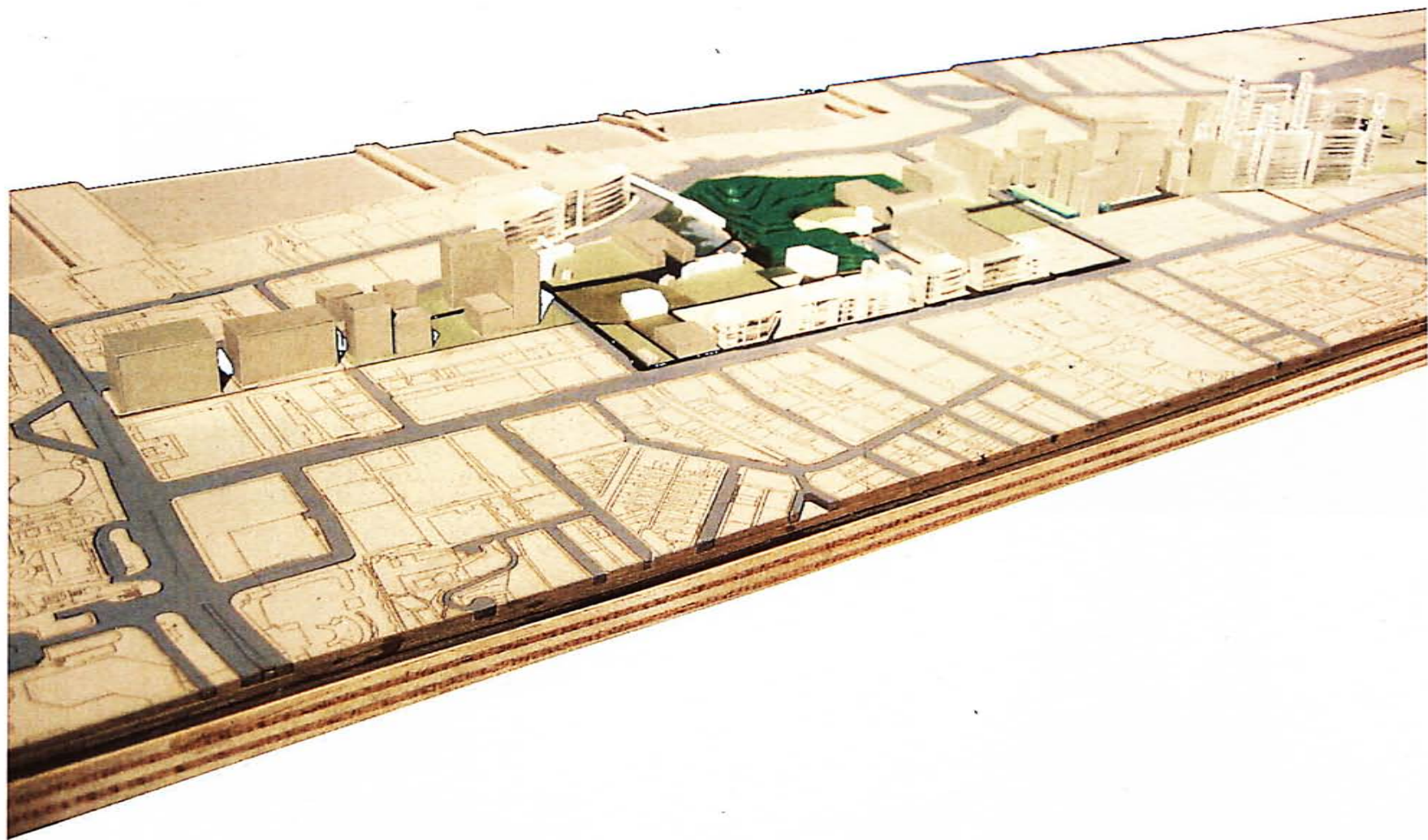
1. Zoning
2. Network
3. Infrastructure
4. Major program
5. Density

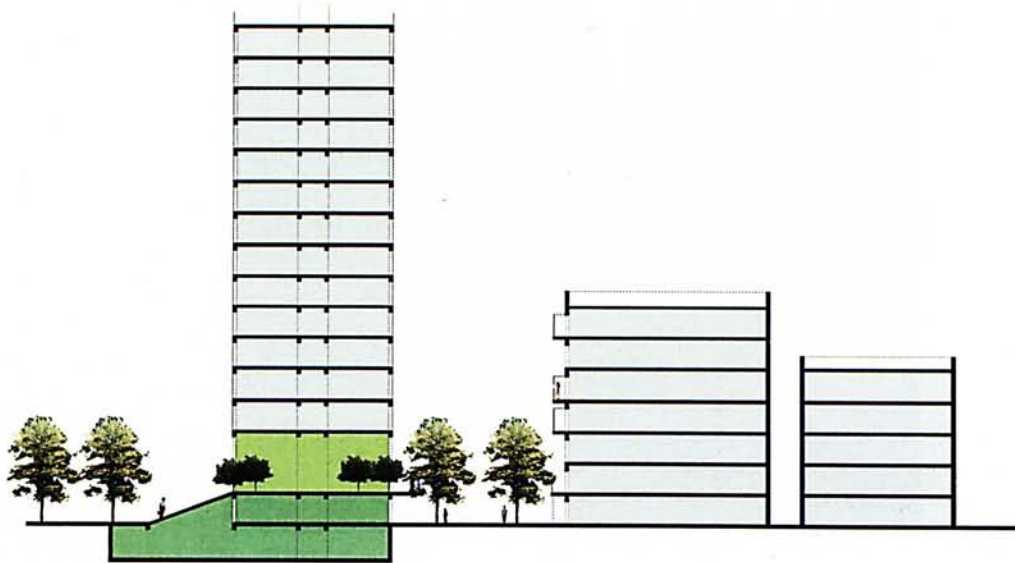




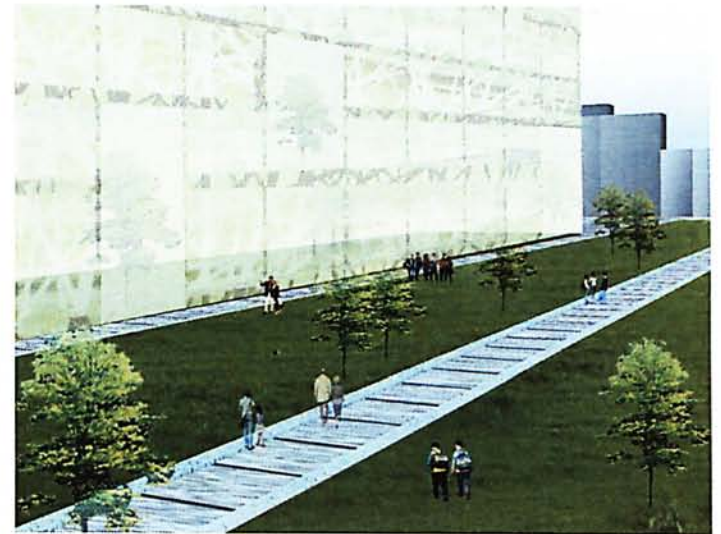




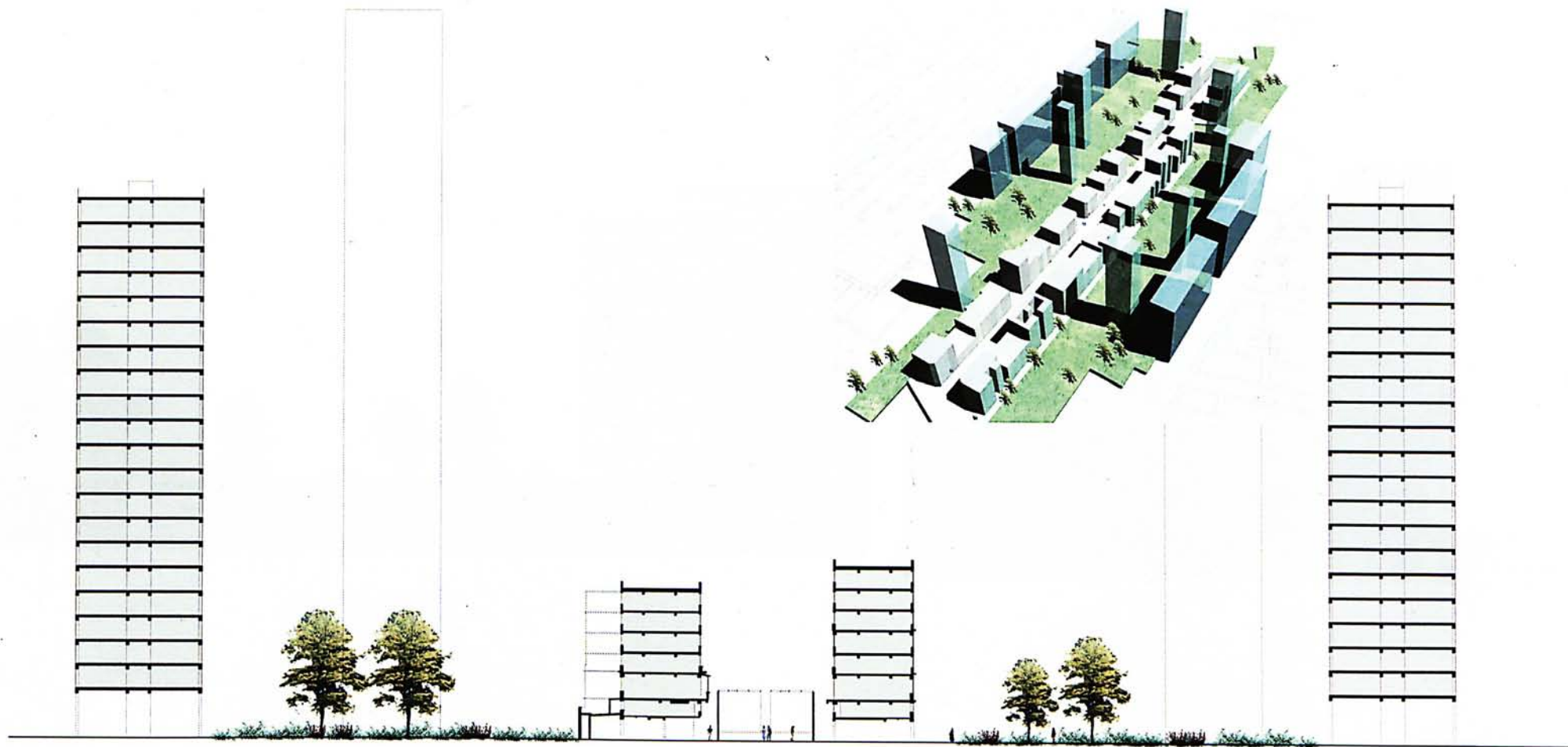




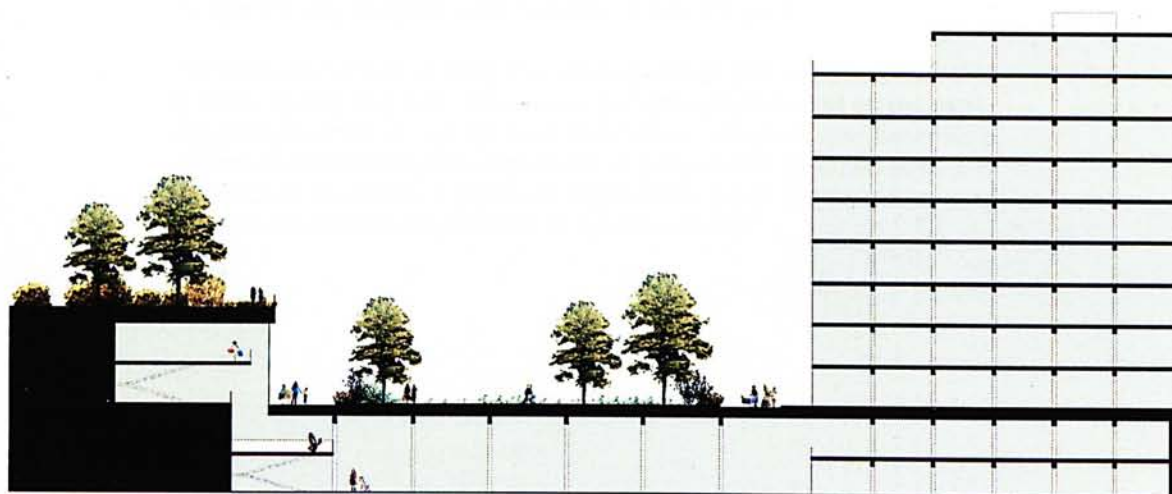
Section AA'







Section BB'



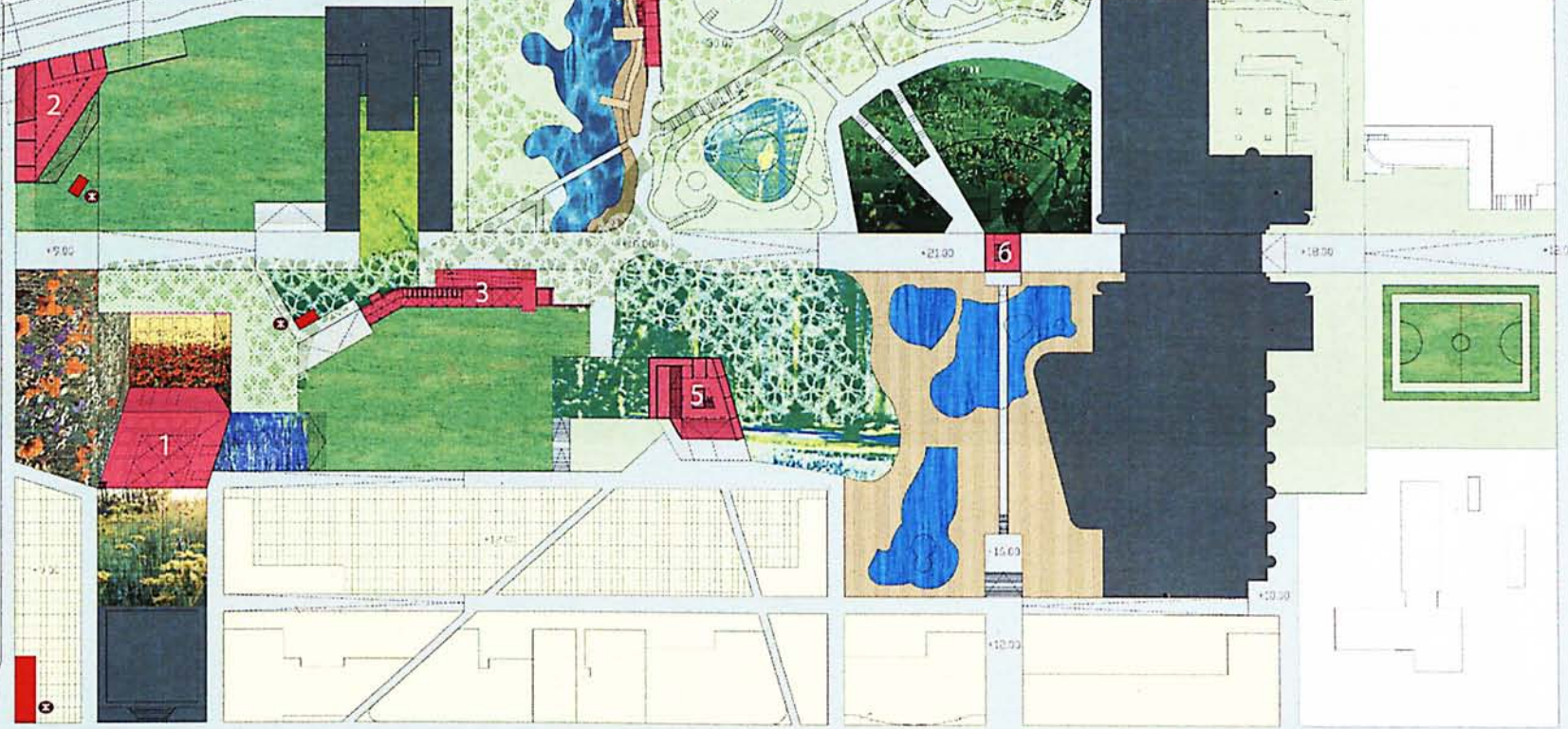
Section CC'

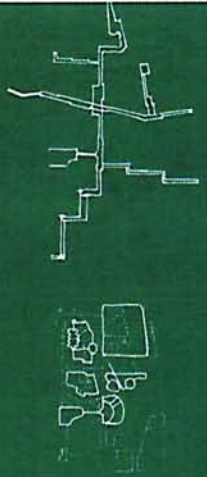
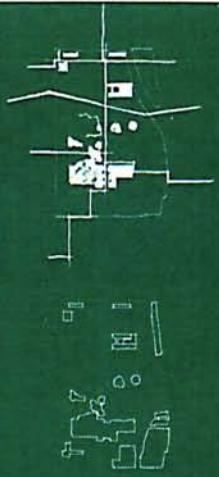
4.0 Internal organization

Moving to the internal organization of the existing Kowloon Park area, I first studied the object and path relationship through a series of diagrammatic analysis. And I found that it is really interesting to see a whole list of eclectic city program exist together inside this park.

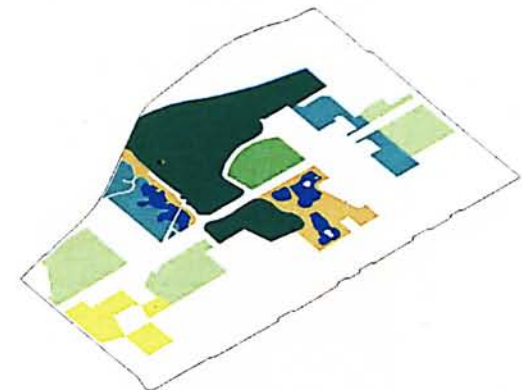
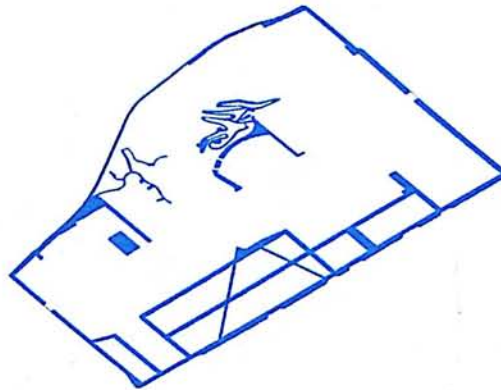
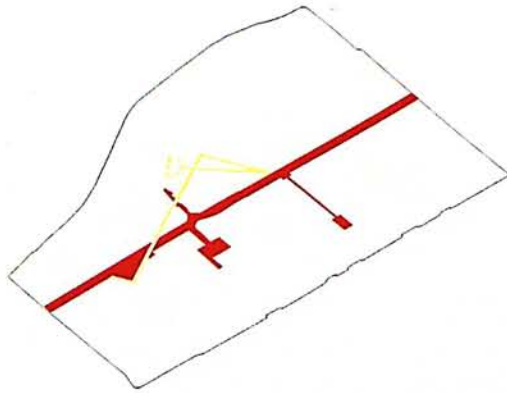
The decision here is to keep the existing object and retain such kind of eclectic quality but just restructure the path system based on the existing paths in order to set up finer circulation. The park now becomes a system of object and path with series of green patch attached to it. The intention is to create a series of fragmented green patch and each of that has its specific relationship to nature and city.

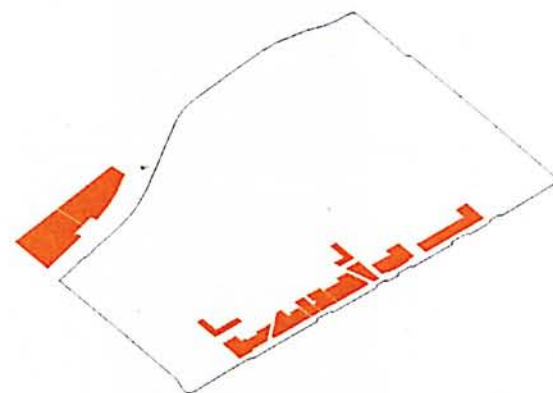
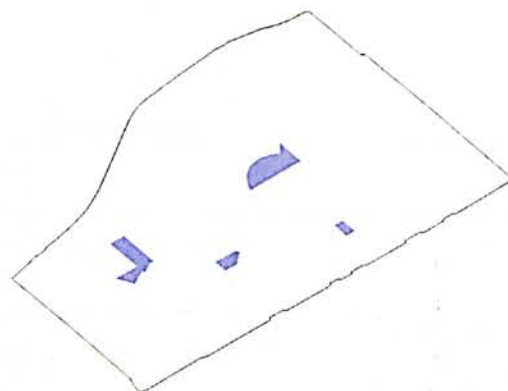
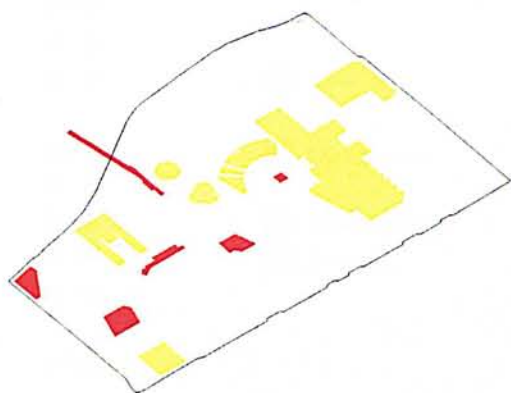
Site Plan





1. Major axis 2. Path 3. Patch 4. New and old object 5. Open space 6. New buildings

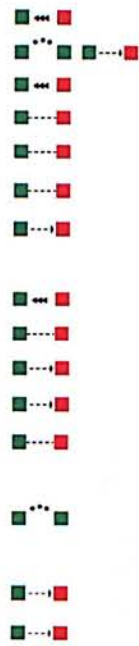




Existing Programs/Objects



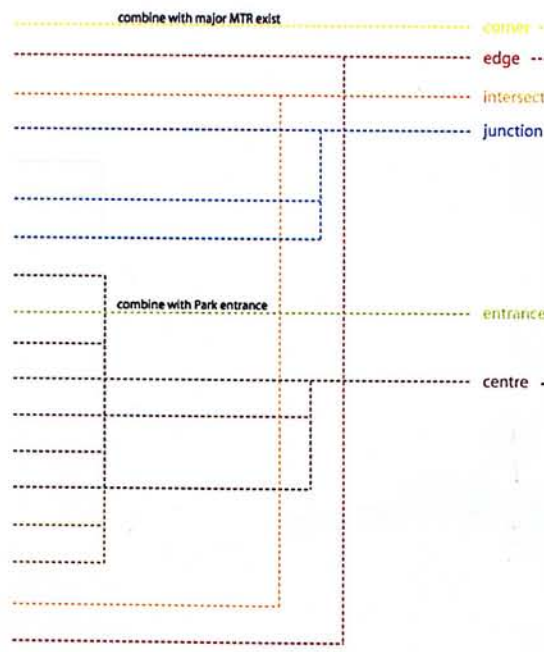
Strategies



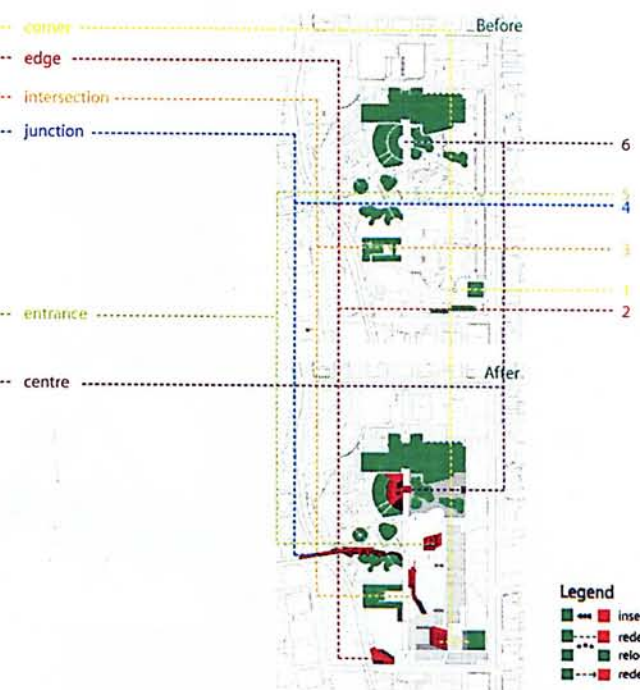
New Programs/Objects



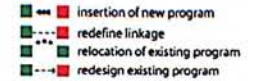
Synthesis



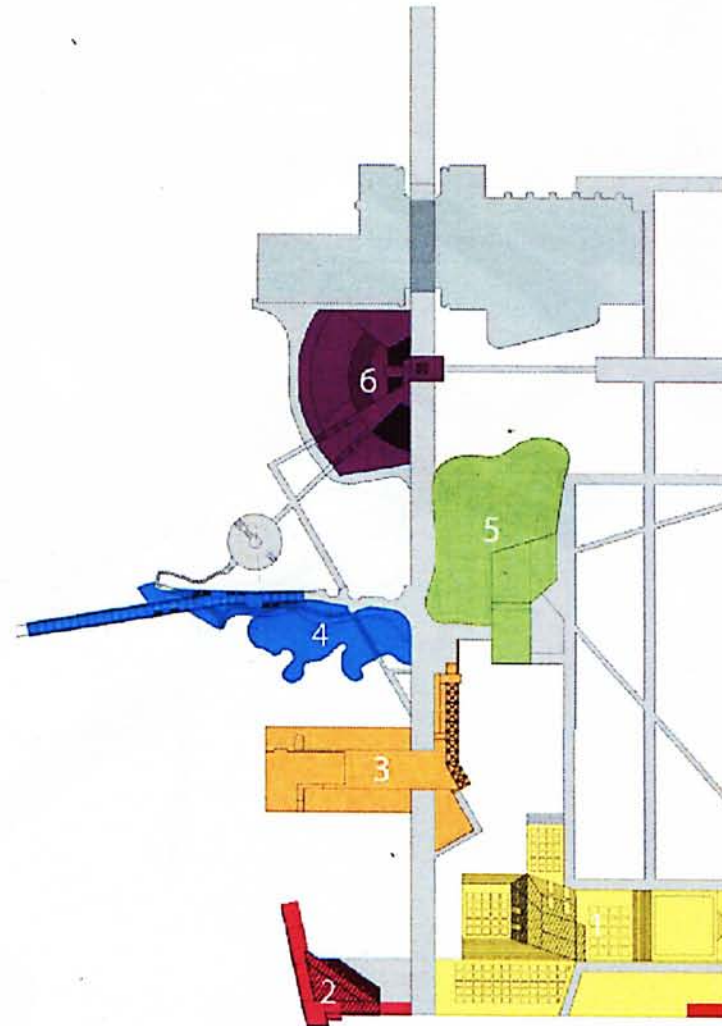
Programmatic Layout

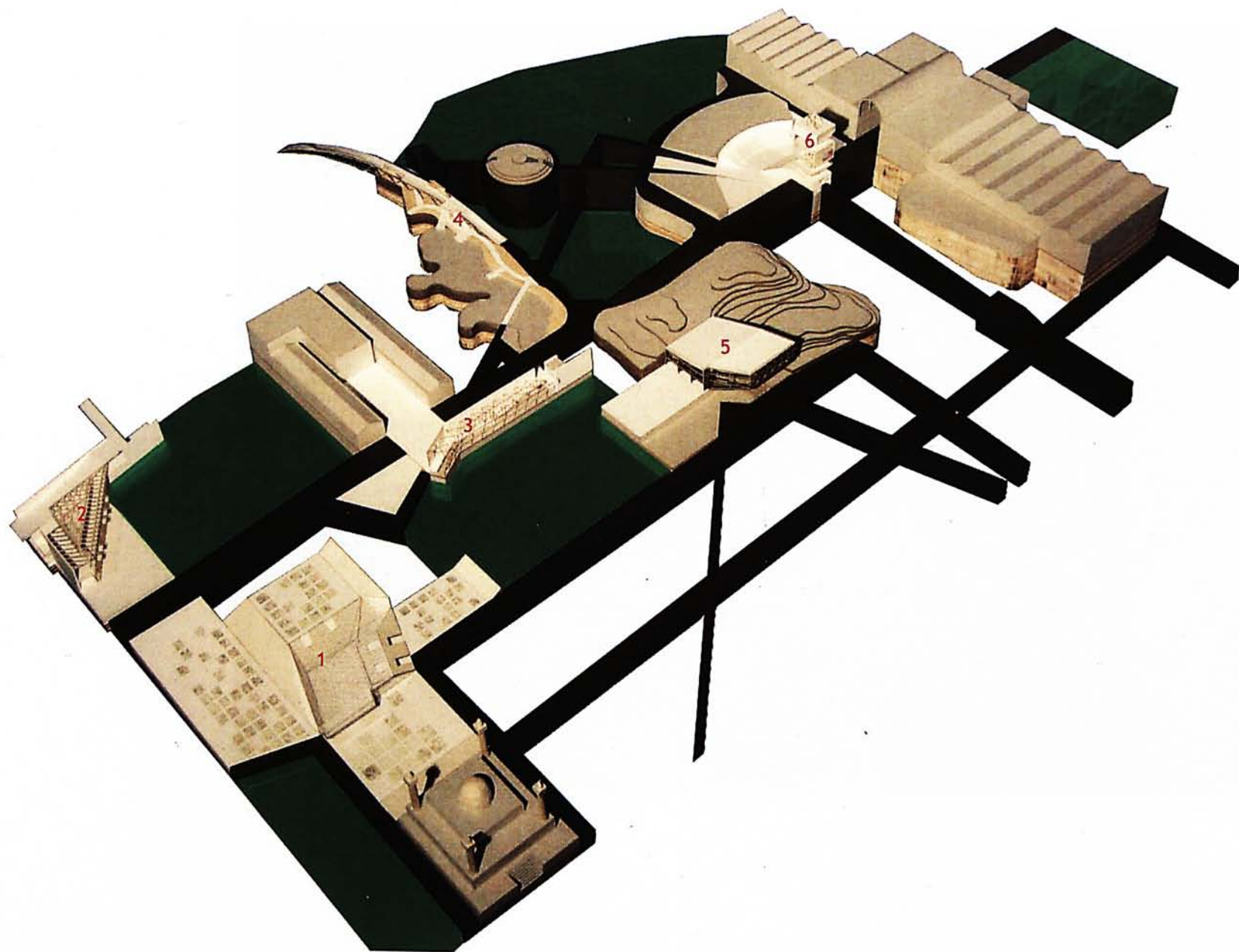


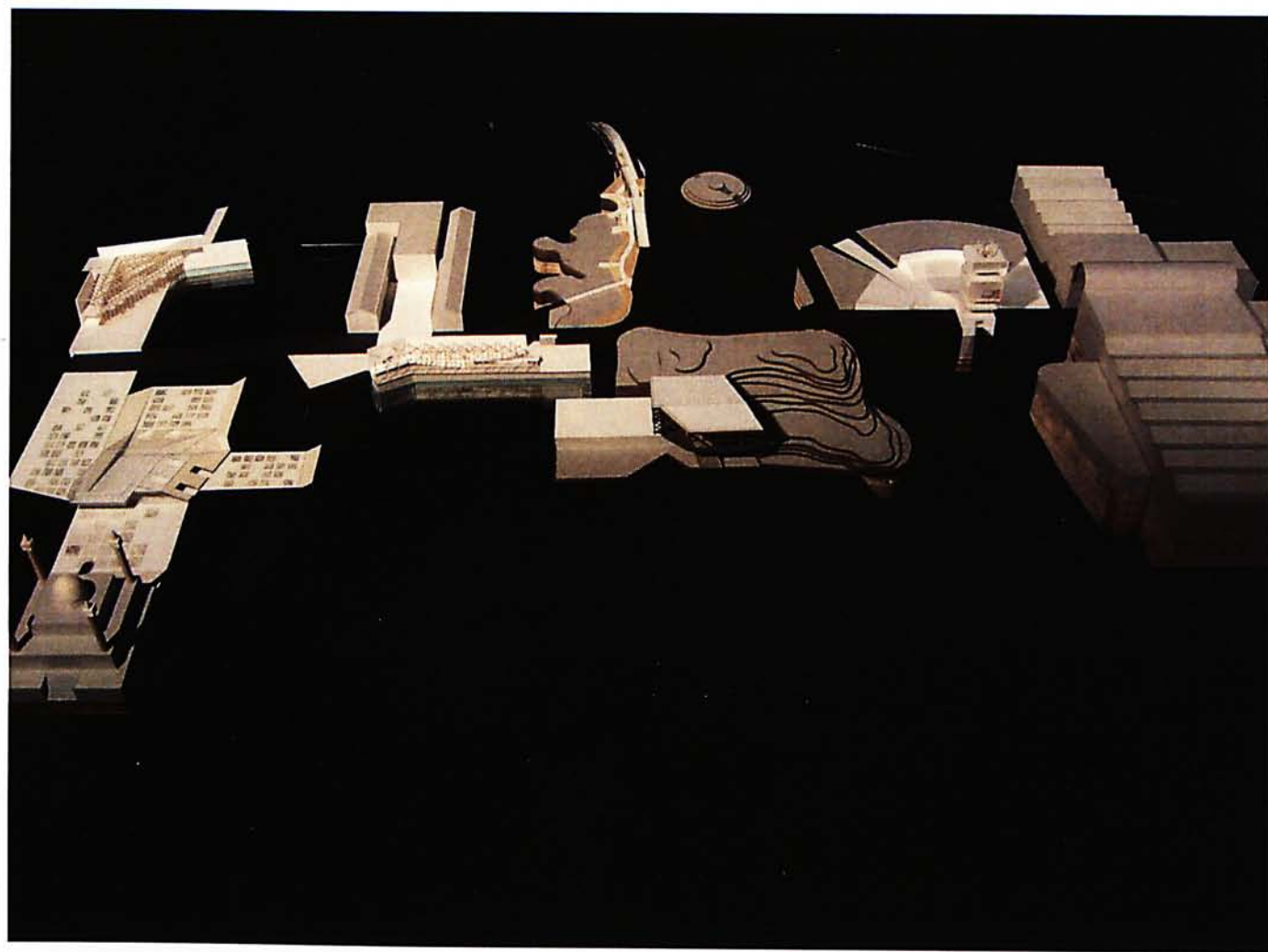
Legend

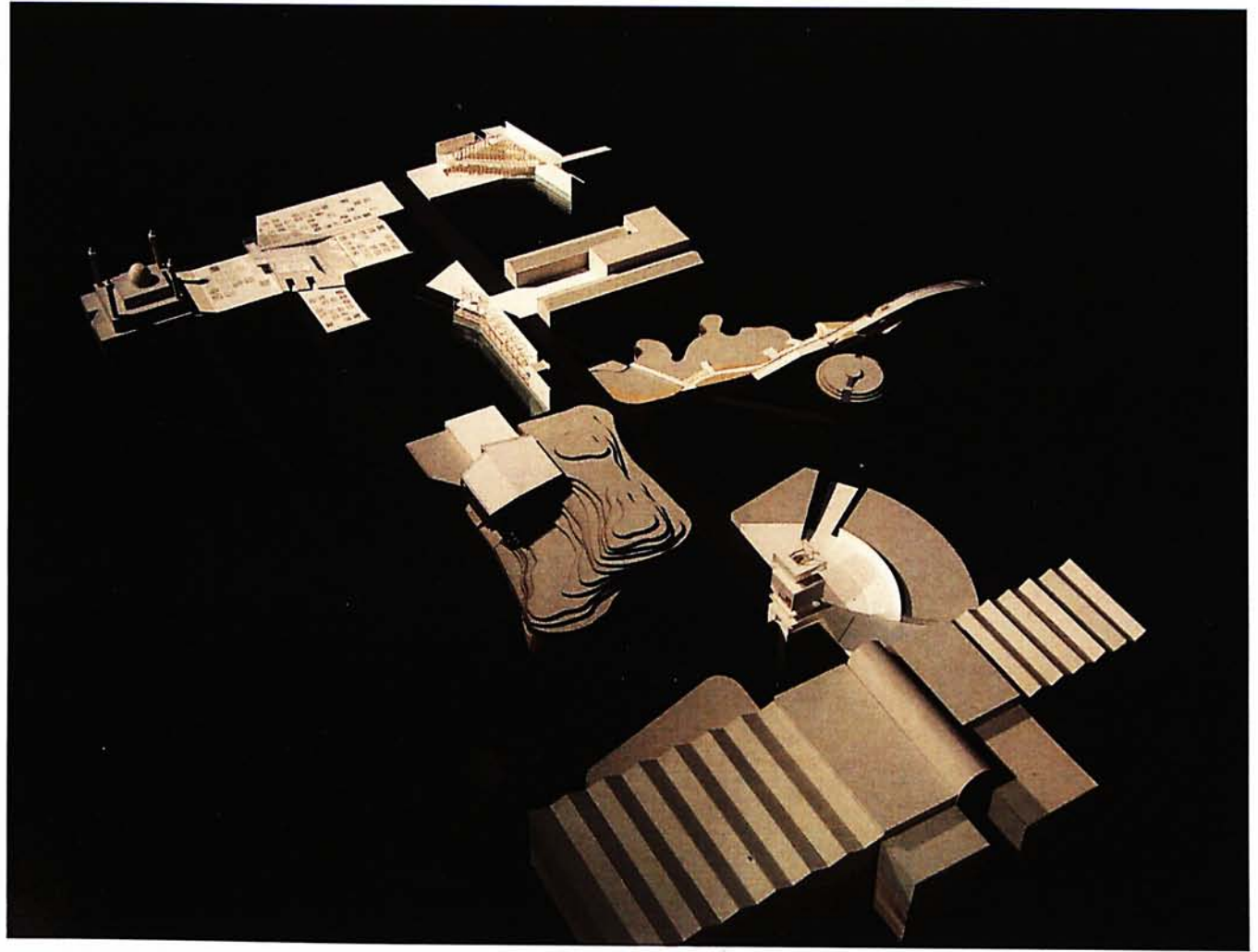


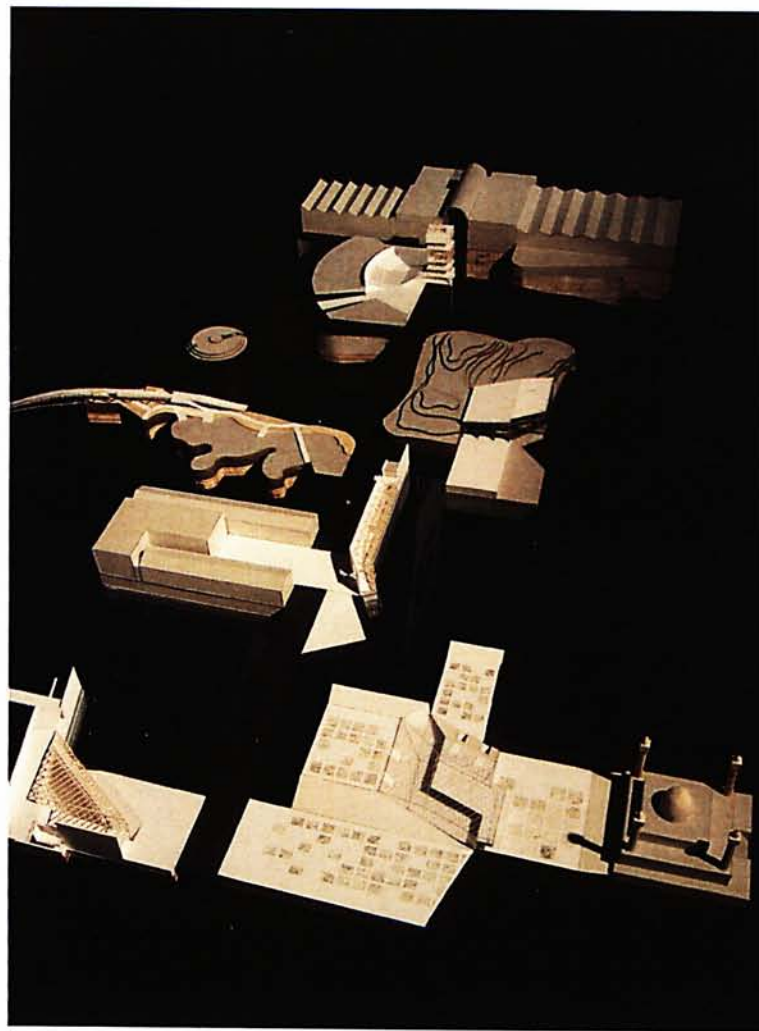
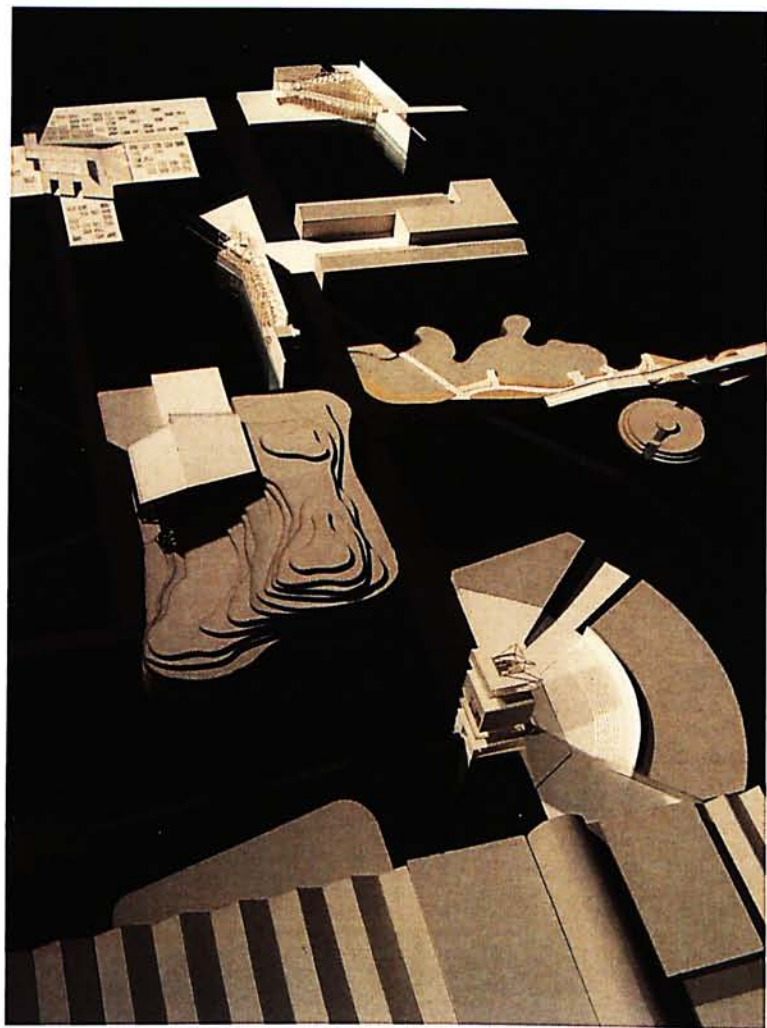
6 major moments

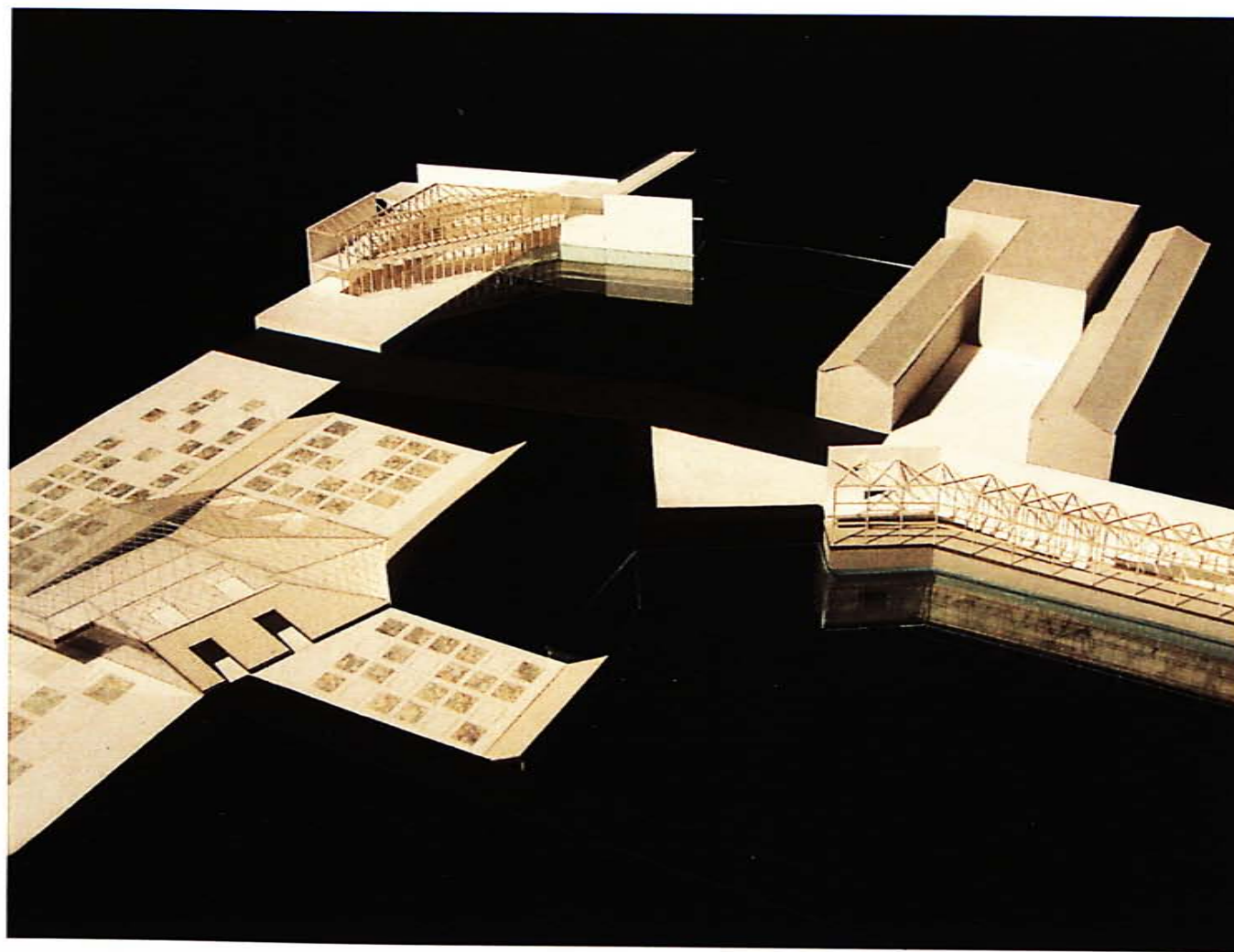


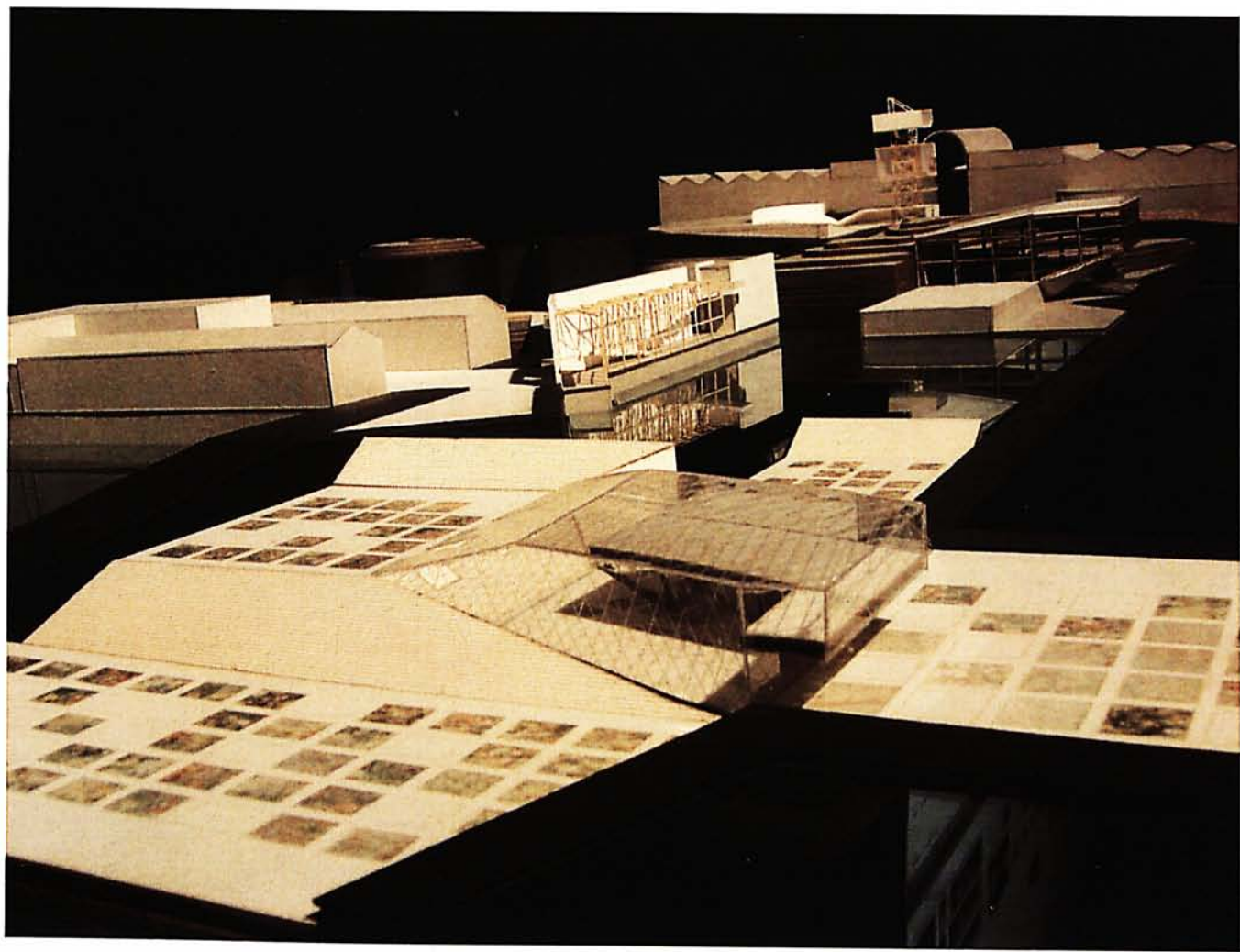










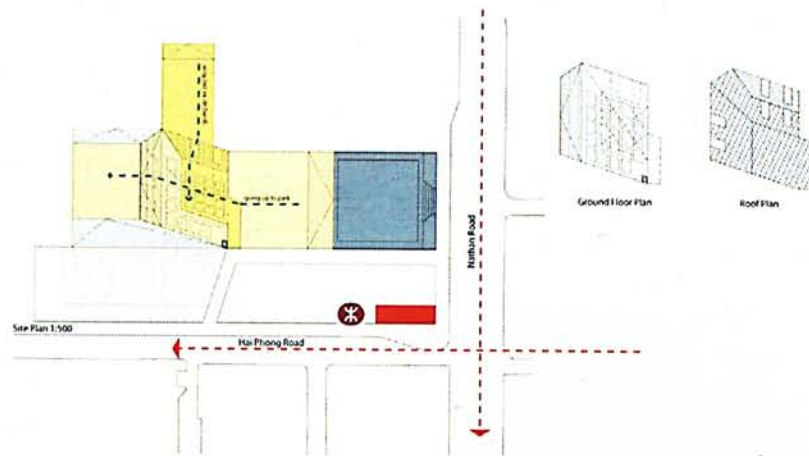


5.0 Individual Moments

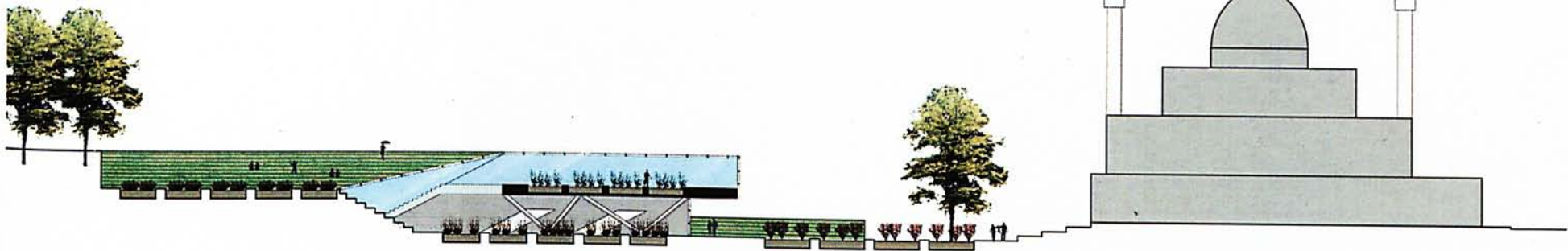
In terms of programs, there are 4 major strategies to deal with the existing object:

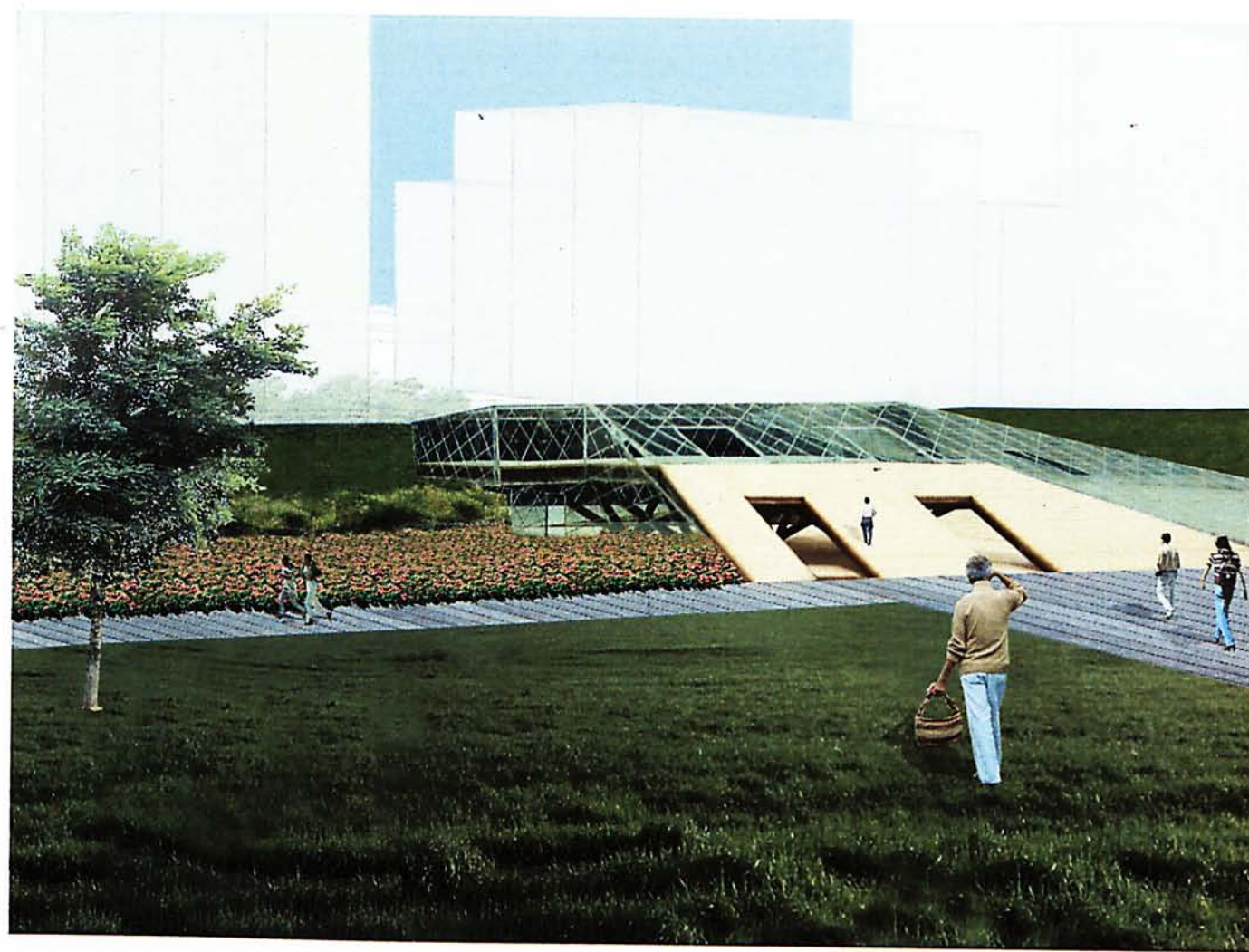
- 1) insertion of new program in respond to the existing
- 2) to redesign existing programs
- 3) to relocate existing programs and
- 4) to link new and old programs

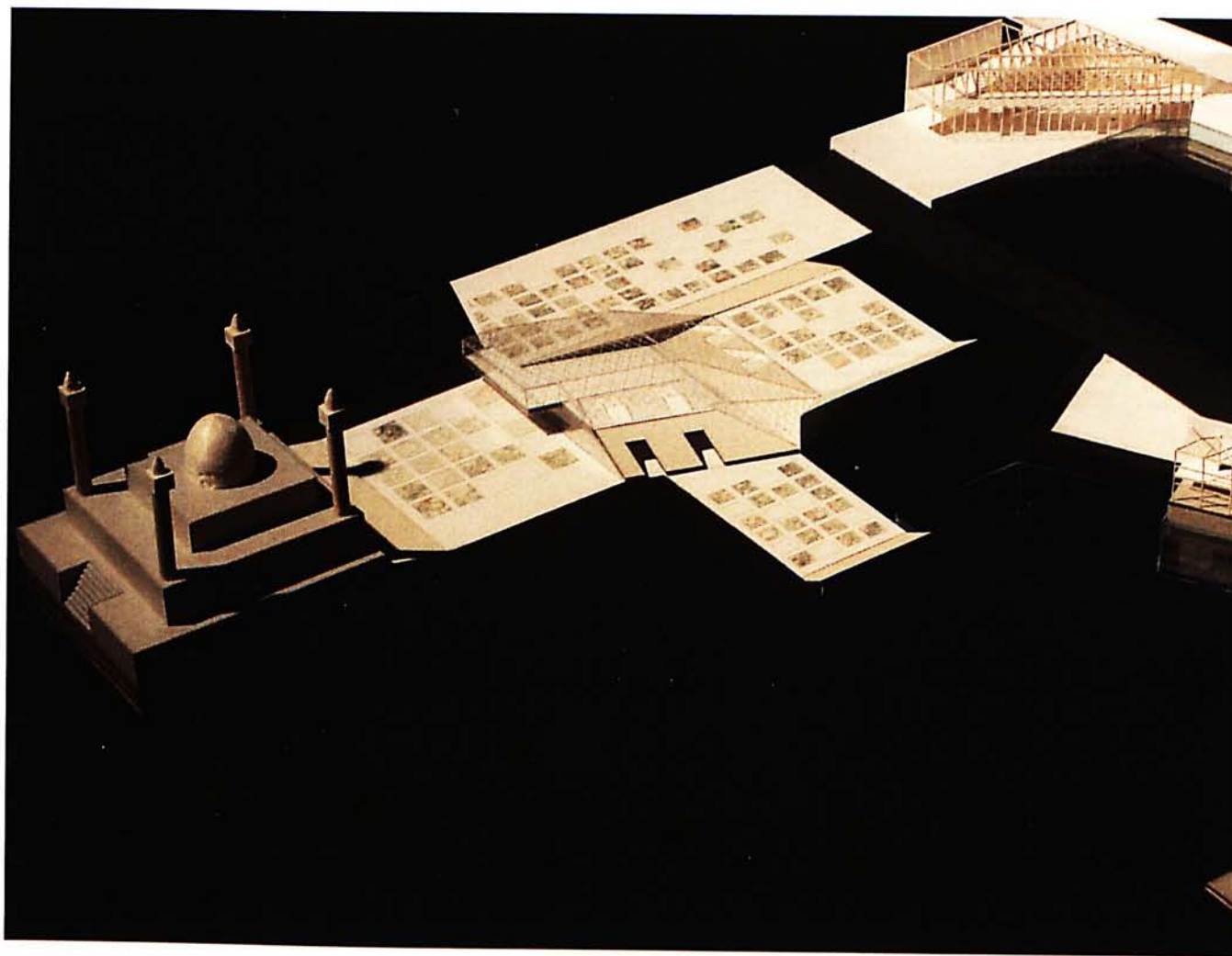
after a series of synthesis, six major moments is extracted for further development. They deal with the mosque, the health resource and exhibition centre, the museum of history, the bird lake, a kind of forest in the park and the amphitheatre respectively.

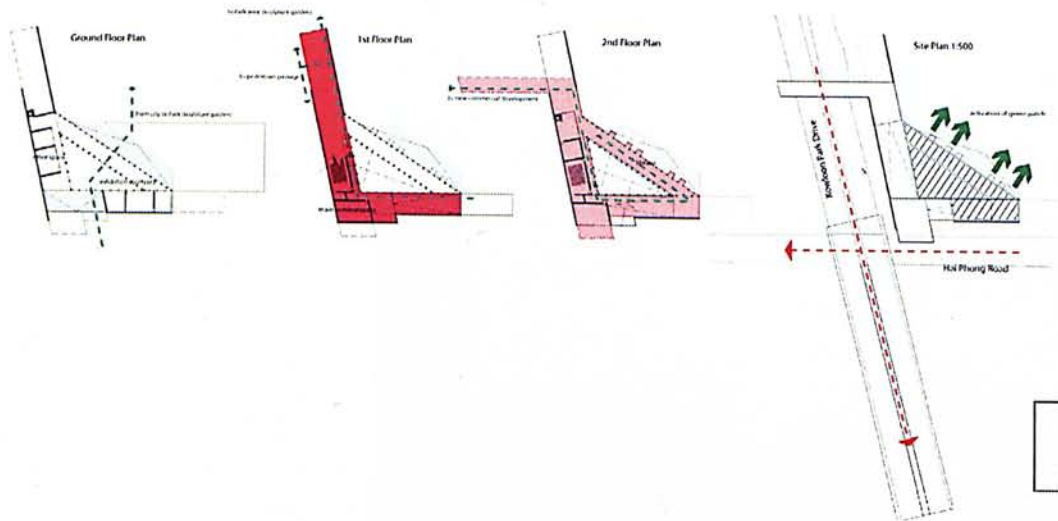


1	Communal Garden & Green House	Location : Corner
	Programmatic Strategy: Insertion of a communal "open" garden in contrast to the "enclosed" Mosque	
	Urban Strategy: Addressing the corner and the major MTR exist of the Park	
	Architectural Strategy: Transparent mass (green house) corresponds to the opaque mass (Mosque), bleachers as major connection	









2

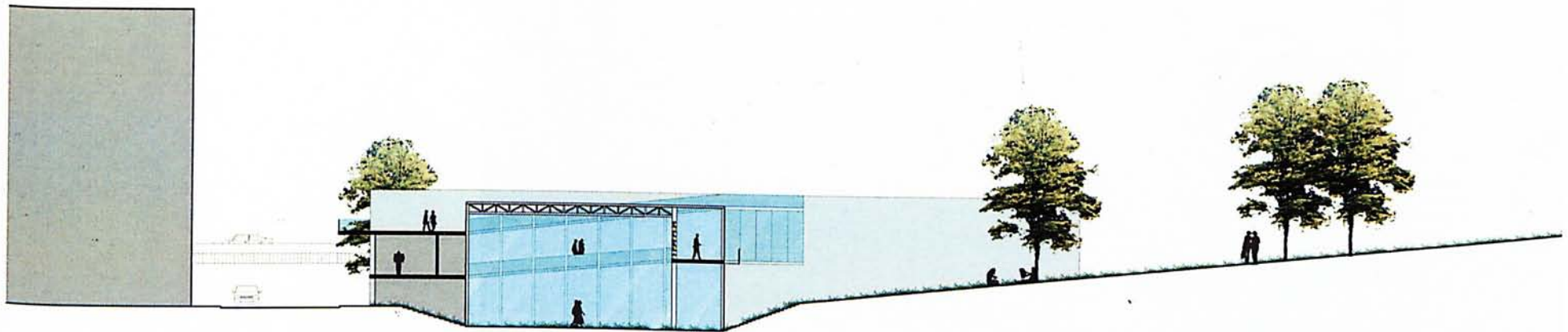
Health Resource and Exhibition Centre plus a new Library

Location: Edge

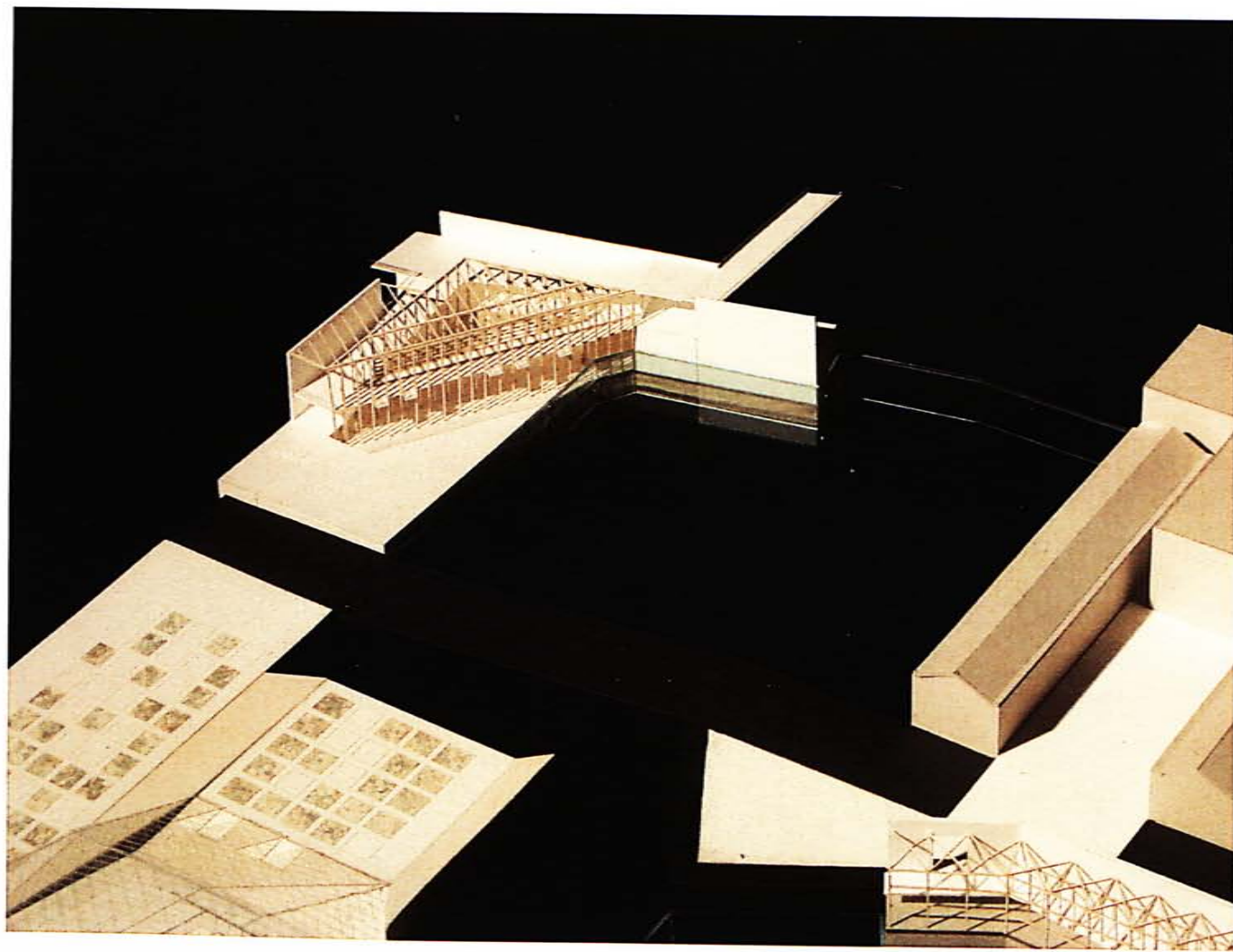
Programmatic Strategy: Cultural activities to connect Park and City, activating the green patchwork

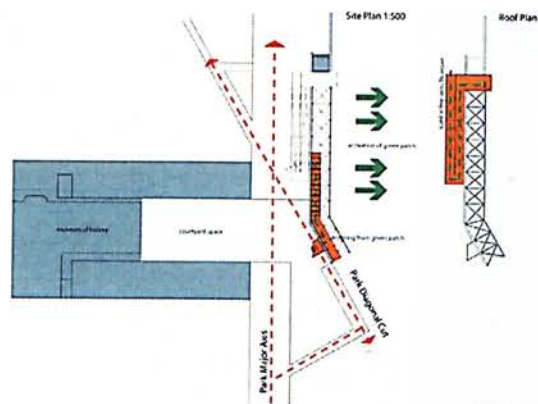
Urban Strategy: Activation of green, screening out highway traffic, connecting to commercial development nearby

Architectural Strategy: ramped loop to provide smooth connection from lower level to higher level

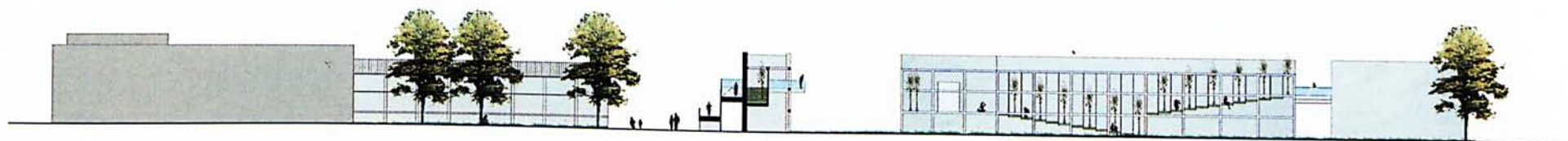




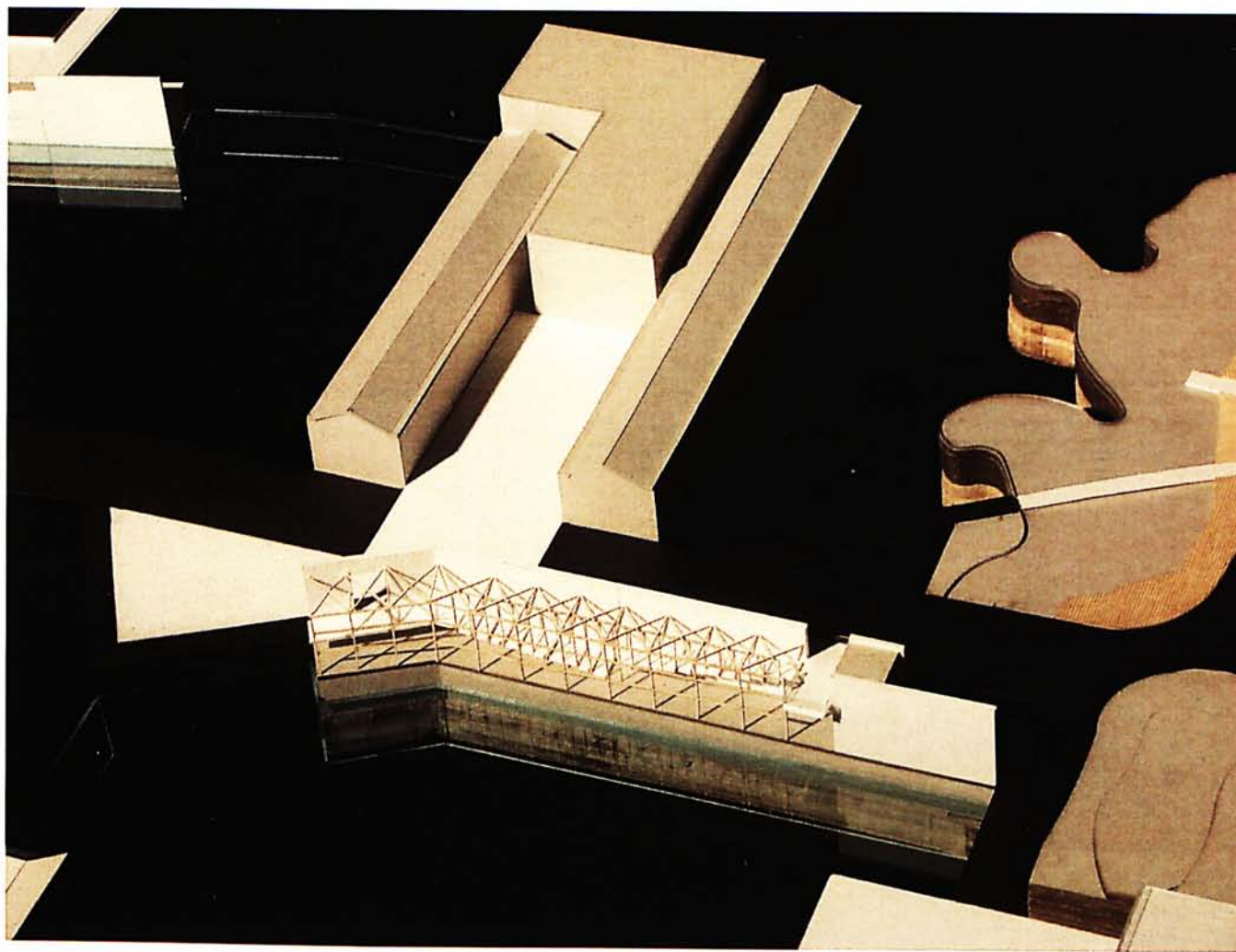


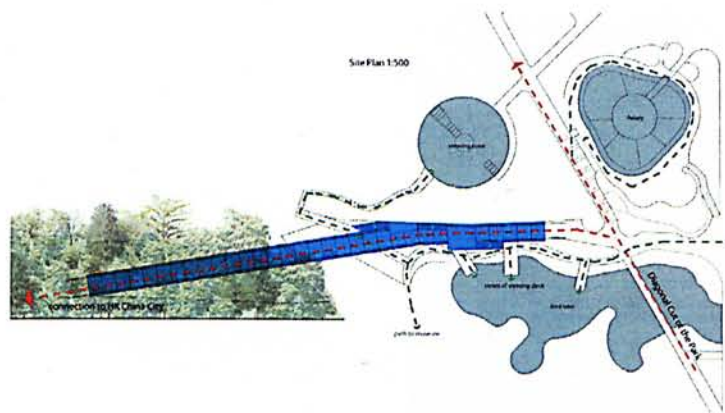


3	Cafe/Tea garden Programmatic Strategy: Urban Strategy: Architectural Strategy:	Location : Intersection Insertion of Cafe/Tea garden to support the function of museum extension of museum courtyard space to form new plaza right at the intersection a piece of wall to separate traffic and activity zone (green patch for communal activities like picnic)
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4

Bridge to HK China City

Programmatic Strategy:

Urban Strategy:

Architectural Strategy:

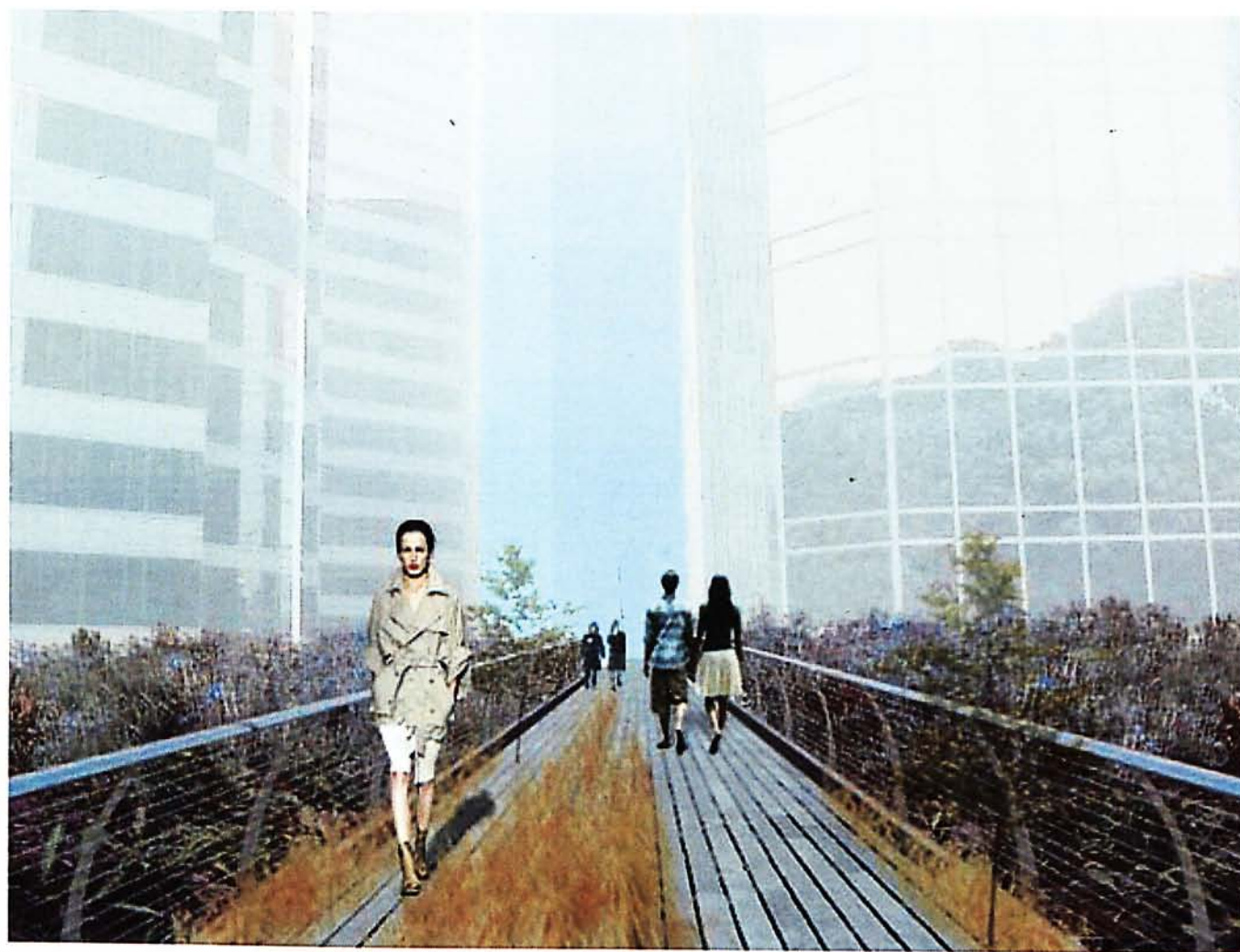
Location: junction

insertion of viewing deck to facilitate the bird lake program

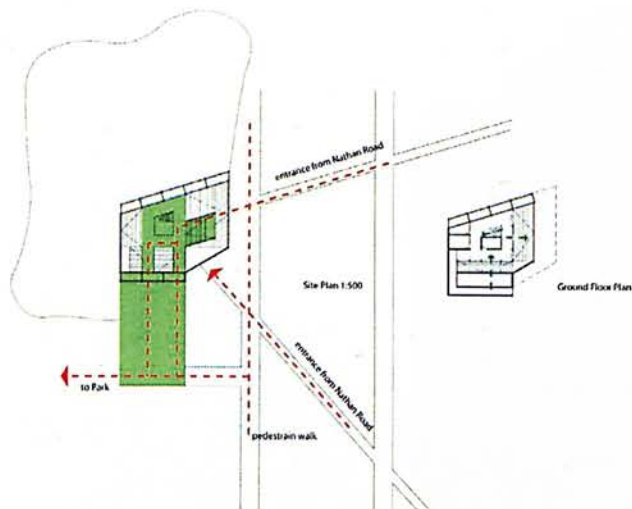
an intersection which connects the bird lake, aviary, viewing cone and the HK China City

transforming the existing bridge into a habitable landscaped bridge



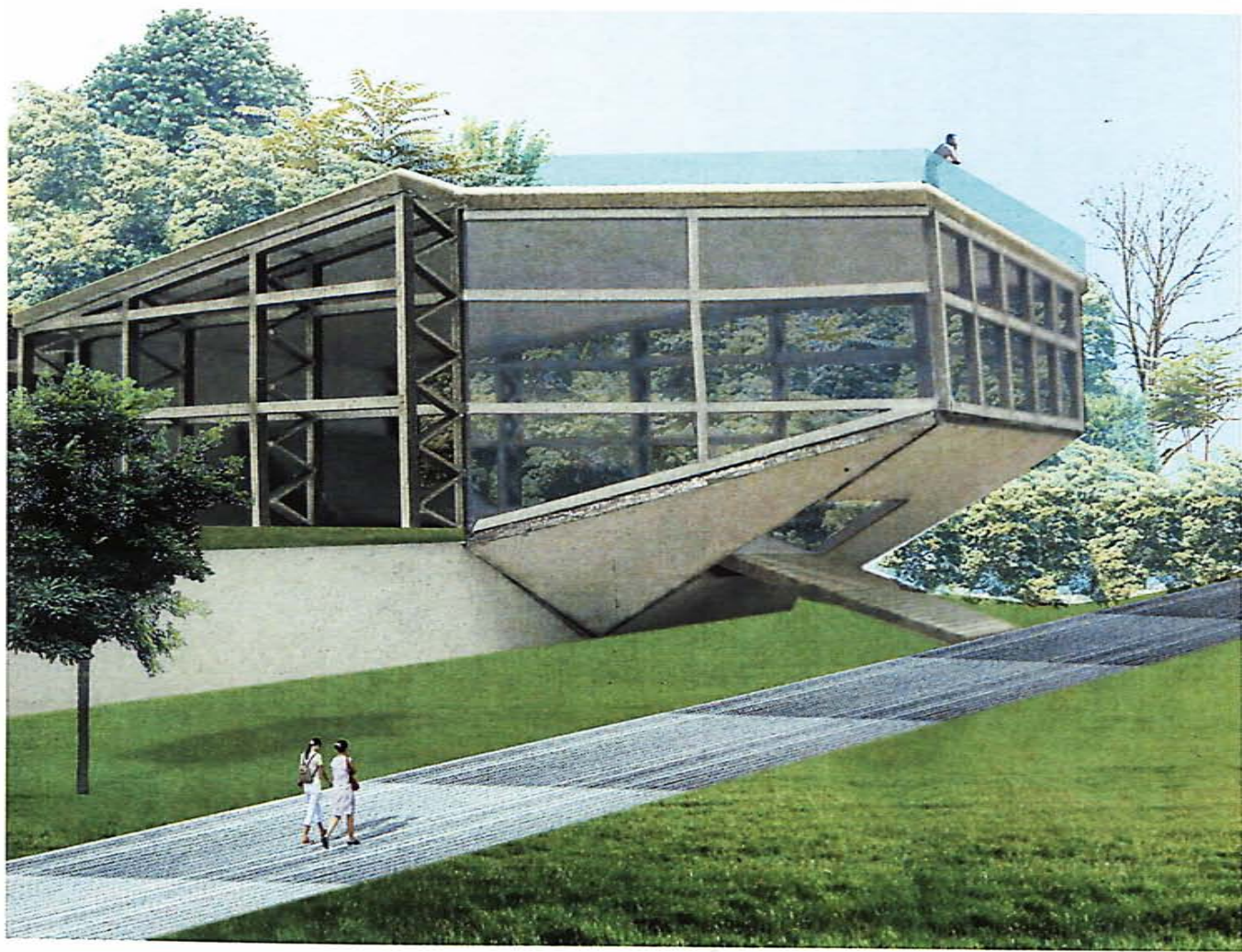


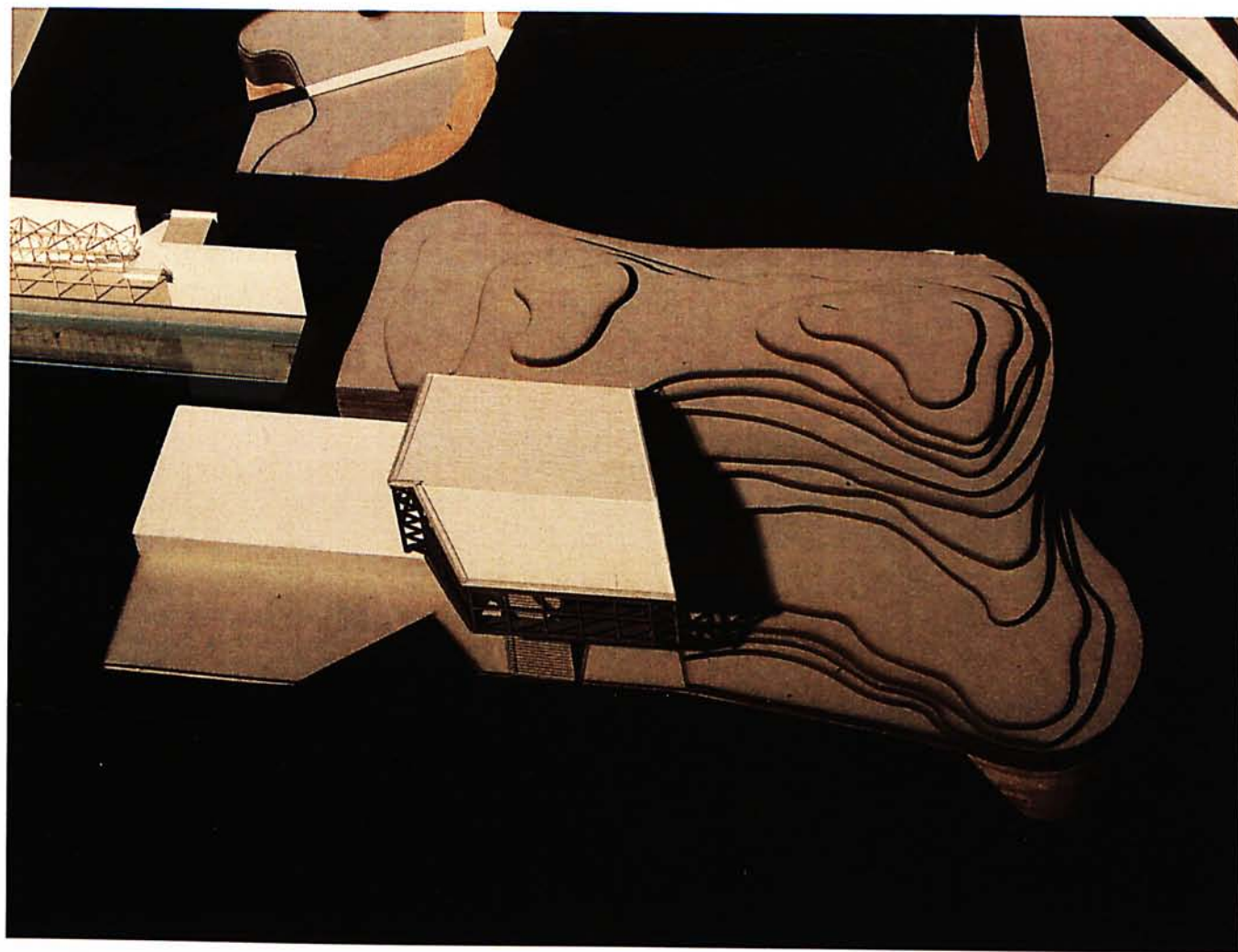


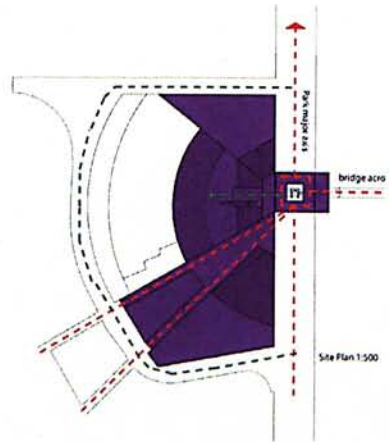


5	Stage for performance Programmatic Strategy: Urban Strategy: Architectural Strategy:	Location : Entrance Insertion of a stage to provide space for performance in relationship to the wild landscape a pavilion type stage to direct the flow from Nathan Road to the Park, addressing the entrance exposed formal structure in contrast to the organic landscape
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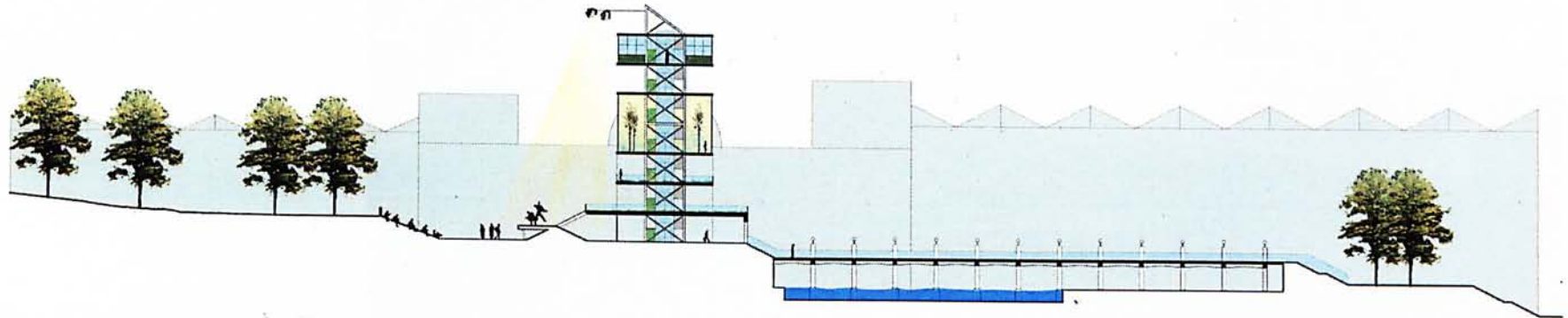


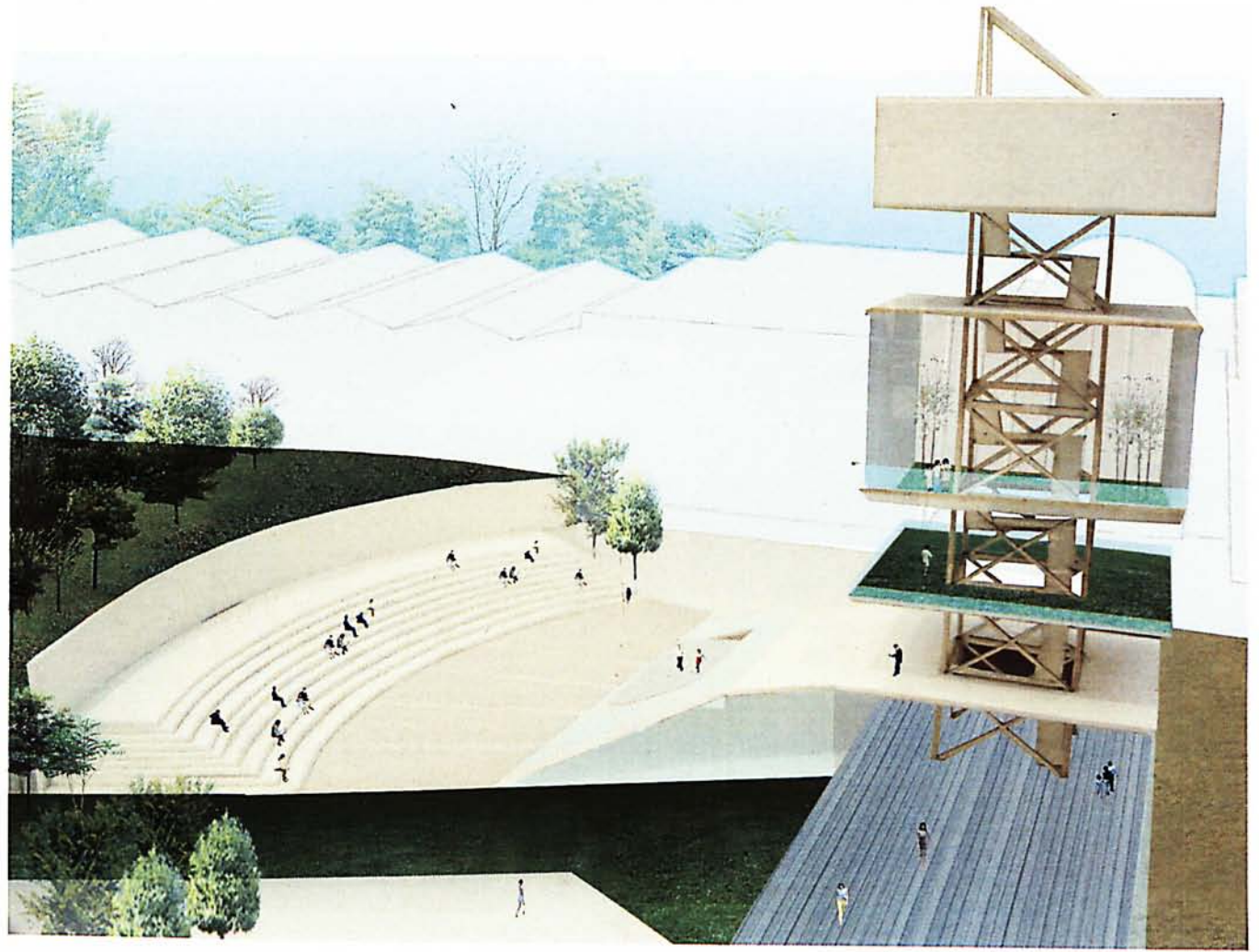






6	<p>Viewing Tower</p> <p>Programmatic Strategy: transforming the water fountain to viewing tower, creating a dialogue of viewing and being viewed</p> <p>Urban Strategy: a viewing tower located right in the heart of the park that overlook the whole park and the city</p> <p>Architectural Strategy: a structural tower that accomodate outdoor and indoor landscape</p> <p>Location : Centre</p>
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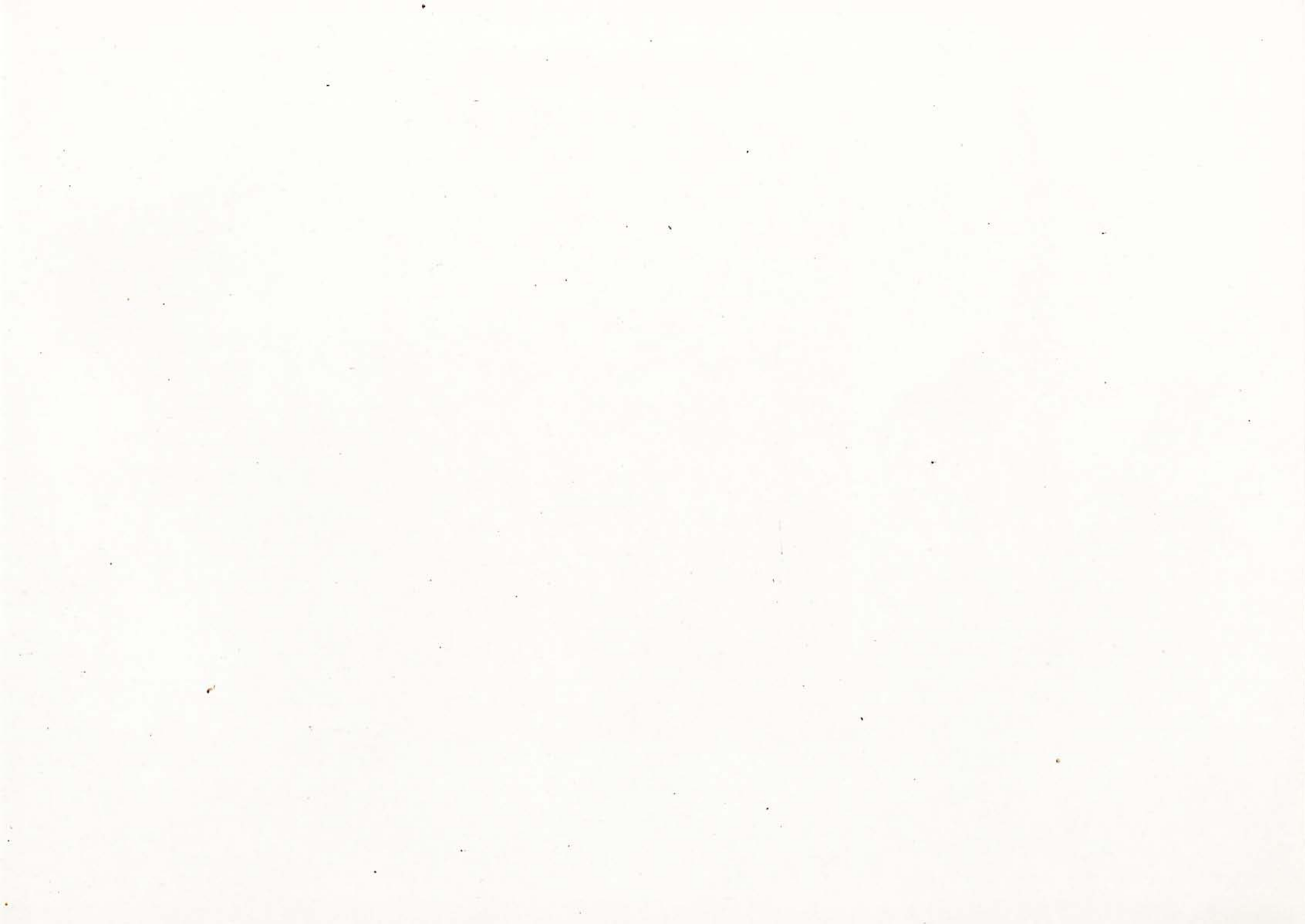






5.0 Conclusion

The final part of this thesis is to test out a series of building typologies that has a specific relationship between building and nature. And the final conclusion of is to open up concern about city and nature. This thesis is trying to define architecture with the existence of nature and the existence of nature should actually be a kind of sythetic condtion with the city rather than a force that is applied outward.



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